



World To-Day Series

# Socialism and Gandhism

BY

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## INTRODUCTION.

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India is passing through a series of experiences which it has been given to few other countries to face. While the rest of the world presents a variety of cultures and nationalities—ancient, or modern, which have full control over their destiny, India stands unique in that her even progress as a nation and her hoary civilization have been subjected to the onslaughts of a foreign invasion and the escape and emancipation from it has therefore become her sole pre-occupation. It is in seeking to bring about this deliverance from an alien bondage which had become widespread and deep-rooted that differences of views and vision have steadily come into being—and with them differences in tempo. The mild and mendicant methods pursued till the year 1920 having given place to an altogether new scheme of strategy and a novel plane of fight, it is but natural that there should have been from time to time raised doubts and difficulties as to the effectiveness of such a strategy and struggle and no one denies that they should spring from the spirit of the utmost honesty and genuineness. Not only therefore has the method of combating the foreign power become a subject of controversy, but the objective of the struggle involved in overthrowing it and replacing it by what we have all agreed compendiously to term Swaraj, has also become the centre of a fierce conflict. Indeed the two issues are but the manifestations of the same conflict. Shall we overthrow the British Empire in India by violence or non-violence? This is so comprehensive a problem

that it includes and involves in itself the collateral problem of what form the new Swaraj should assume. There is not much difficulty in visualising that form of Swaraj which shall have been established by a bloody revolution in India and that which shall have been carved out by the play of Satyagraha and the force of Non-violence. In spite of the tangible achievements of non-violence during the short period it has been on trial a section of the younger generation is deeply suspicious of its potency and is therefore under the influence of an ongoing lingering desire to lessen the severity of the restraints imposed by it. It requires not much imagination to see that a new force is not readily accepted by the generation to which it has just been introduced. When the steam engine was invented it took time to become popular. Even to-day the cottage weaver looks upon with suspicion the fly shuttle that has been applied to his handloom. There are people who still fear to travel by the Railway train, the steamer and the aeroplane. Indeed these have failed often enough for do we not read of a collision of trains one day, the foundering of a ship the next day and the crash of an aeroplane the third day? Yet do those vehicles gain in popularity as time goes on. Even so there were people who would not take to Kerosene when it replaced the castor oil nor gas when it took the place of Kerosene and finally of electricity which has eclipsed both oil and gas. We have all been so much accustomed to force as the arbiter of international destiny that we can hardly reconcile ourselves to the possibility of non-violence taking its place. Non-violence as an aggressive, as a positive force is whole philosophy and its strategy must evolve itself with the march of experiments and the multiplication of experiments, which become really experiments, with truth. Champaran was such an

experiment made in 1917. Then came Kaira in 1918, Borsad in 1921, Gurkhabag in 1927, Bardoli 1928, then the great Salt Satyagraha of 1930, the Harijan emancipation of 1938 and finally the Council Programme of 1937-38 worked under the inspiring guidance of the eternal principles of Satyagraha. This new cult, this full-blown philosophy is yet on its trial but the successes it has achieved proves its strength and its potency even against a puissant power like the British in India. What then is the need to replace Gandhism by the several 'isms' which are tearing Europe to pieces?

When our comrades plead hard for a socialist form of Government one is tempted to ask whether it will not be merely a Horson's choice for if the revolutionary does not swear by non-violence and overpowers the British in India by force, he will not as he need not pause to sound popular opinion as to polity that Swaraj should assume. If on the contrary, we are able to come by our own through the triumph of *Ahimsa and Satyagraha* then we need not be in much doubt for while reviving the Socialistic principles on which Indian society has had her ancient foundations well and truly laid, we shall have to adopt it to modern conditions so as to ensure not the maximum measure of comfort to the maximum number of people but to guarantee the modicum of the needs of human happiness to every man and woman and child in India. This contrast between the two objectives may briefly be described as the contrast between modernism and Gandhism. Gandhi has not discovered a new philosophy of life, but has only reapplied ancient solutions to modern problems. What he has given to India is the method not the ideal. The ideal has been there for centuries and for ages. It has doubtless rusted and is covered over with the debris of

the ruin to which it has been subjected in the past. Indeed it is. It has been well nigh lost sight of. But the quest for it on proper lines has led to its rediscovery. What is popularly termed Gandhism is only a restatement of this ideal with all the necessary adaptations of it to the changed conditions of the modern age. The essential features of this ideal are portrayed in the following pages which are more or less reprints of articles contributed to the press these seven years. They bring out the vivid contrast between a form of society in which the divisions are set on socio-economic lines holding the balance of power even amongst the various groups for all time and that other form of society which is in a perpetual state of flux, and in which there are eternal conviction currents boiling over in the cauldron of life upon the fires of competition and violence, tending to create a stress and strain by the bottom layers always striving to rise to the level of the strata above them and those to still higher levels. The struggle to-day is between the concept of an omnipotent state and that of human personality. We contend that "a social structure based on mutual appreciation and mutual co-operation is the only sound solution against the selfish individualism of the Liberal school as well as against the tyrannical collectivism of the omnipotent state". Between the "Unrestrained individualism of the Liberal capitalist" and "the wholesale loss of individual right by socialism and communism we may have to recognize the right to private property in a measure, while nationalising the key industries and the means of production for the remedy to the evil of private property lies rather in the prevention or restriction of the abuse and not in the abolition of the right"

The evolution of socialistic tendencies in Indian politics is of recent origin. In 1928 when the All Parties Conference met at Lucknow the expatiation on Socialism by Pandit Jawaharlal disturbed the Talukdars of Oudh whose representatives were there on the platform and it led to the adoption of a clause in the Nehru Report that all properties legitimately acquired would be guaranteed to the owners. The notable triumph of Satyagraha as demonstrated by the great event of the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement of March 1931, followed by the formulation of a Socio-Economic programme at the Karachi Session (March 1931) of the Congress gave a quietus to the uprise of the tide but with the recrudescence of Civil Disobedience in 1932 and the non-possumus attitude adopted by the British in India, sense of unbelief in nonviolence and even of cynicism overtook the prisoners amongst the English Educated section who came out of jails with a cut and dry programme of Socialism and Communism to be worked out by a hardly veiled partiality for methods other than of Satyagraha. The Materialistic interpretation of History would naturally prefer materialistic weapons of warfare to metaphysical and mystical doctrines of Truth and Ahimsa, and the struggle between Socialism and Gandhism became acute at the Lucknow (1936 April) session. In less than a year however people realised at Faizpur (1936 Dec.) that Socialism too had to be Indianised and this marked the turn of the tide in the mind of even the younger and more impatient section of the Congress. We cannot however say that as yet they have begun to realise that of the three great sanctions that sustain Society,—Law, Public opinion and individual Conscience or the inner voice. The last is the greatest, the most unerring and the most infallible. It must be said that Socialism is preached

as yet more as a condescension than as a way of living and a philosophy of life which really Gandhism is, recognises it to be such. Once the potency of non-violence is conceded, a new and inexhaustible source of power stands revealed before us and a social structure reared on the recognition of this principle will be seen to be a new power-house, where operator Gandhi is creating through his dynamo of non-violence and Truth endless Electro-motor power which would move mountains and uproot empires. On the constructive side it would delve and dig up, as if by motor-driven tractors, the debris of a nation that is earth-quaked, and carry out the great process of salvage so as to restore to life and vigour the dying and dead attributes of an ancient civilisation. The socialism of Gandhi is not a mere physical force, but a moral power that refertilizes the national culture which has become barren through neglect which has petrified from within and through overgrowth which have obscured it from outside.

When the problem is viewed in its *native* aspect it will be readily realised that work and wages in India are a strange combination of ideas though they are the inseparable concomitants of Labour in the West. Often times has the criticism been made that when we speak in praise of the craft life of the country and the guarantee of work it has given to the people of the land, we are satisfied with work more work and still more work—and do not think of leisure for our workers. We contend that the very essence of our social scheme is the weaving of work and leisure into human occupation as the warp and weft of Indian craft life. In India there is no *work* and no *leisure*. Work is leisure and leisure is work. Work is art, work is joy and recreation, work is the self-realization of the artist, and the

repose of his soul. Work and leisure are no more separable to the Indian craftman than his body and his soul. [This aspect of the matter is dealt with at a greater length in chapter VIII—Machinery—its back stroke].

Instead of taking this living view of Indian society, we are persuaded to waste time in a mechanical copying of revolutions in the West in all their varying phases, not realising that even in the West a revolution takes a measure of time to complete and does not lend itself to imitation at every stage of its progress or retrogressions. Need we say that copying a revolution in its different phases and stages is like taking each one of the million pictures that make up a talkie for the whole film. Even the Russian Revolution has passed through a variety of changes during the last two decades of its progress and it behoves our young reformers to pause and examine the vicissitudes of a new movement before each part of it is taken for the whole. Need we then say that Our Socialism is destined to achieve better results? It will unfold itself to human vision when once the fundamentals of our national culture are grasped. A nation that has no designs upon its neighbour naturally consists of citizens who have no designs upon one another. Love and Service shall be the watch words of its growth and the sending forth of a prayer by each individual for the common weal of the whole nation necessarily bears its repercussion in the nation fostering a perfected growth of the individual, so that each man shall develop into a perfected man.

and make him the component of a Federation of humanity cultured, skilled, elevated in morale, equipped in life and not automation, a toothed wheel, a crank rod, a cotterpin, a brass bearing in the machinery of state, the latter is socialism—the former is Gandhism

MASULIPATAM }  
1-11-1938 }

DR B. PATTABHI SEETARAMAYYA.

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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

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We are expressing our gratitude to the author of this book, Dr. B. Pattabhi Seetaramayya. We hope the public are aware that Dr. B. Pattabhi Seetaramayya is fully engaged in the work of the All India Congress Committee and the All India State Peoples' Federation as a member of the A. I. C. C. and President of the A. S. P. F.

Though he is very busy he has already given us two books.

1. The Constitutions of the World  
(a comparative study)
2. The Economic Conquest of India  
or The British Empire Ltd

Now we feel sure that this our new publication will succeed in stimulating the thought of our patriotic Indians who wish to find a solution to our Political and Economic troubles.

Rajahmundry, }  
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# **Socialism and Gandhism**

## **PART I**



## CHAPTER I

### SOCIALISM—ITS SCOPE AND OUTLOOK

Socialism is the *ism* that seeks to bring about a change in the existing Social order. It began as a reform movement that strives to enlarge the basis of society and widen the scope of the state. Till recently the state began where society and its influence ended. Society largely addressed itself to the provision of food and raiment to its members, leisure and entertainment to those to whom food and clothing were assured. Gradually the State is being prevailed on to assume the responsibility for all. Till recently the State was only collecting taxes and maintaining Law and Order. Now it is obliged to relieve unemployment. What an organization is obliged to concede in response to the clamour of its components on the basis of right, it soon would be obliged to perform as a matter of duty itself, irrespective of agitation from below. That is to say, the vital and operative principles of a movement which began as unrest or an agitation soon crystallize into a creed, a dogma that regulates the activities of the organization. Thus in the State as it prevails to-day, the inequalities and the inequities of the social order are sought to be remedied by the establishment of orphanages and homes for Lepers and fallen sisters the provision of old age pensions, the founding of hospitals

the opening of free schools, the organization of sickness, debility and accident insurance, the introduction of maternity benefits, the guaranteeing of a living wage. All these, however, are the buttresses erected by the rich and the well-to-do to protect their well built but fast crumbling castles. They are acts of charity performed in a spirit of condescension. But it is the labour of the poor cultivator that makes the land-lord rich, it is the skill of the starving craftsman that builds up the wealth of the merchant. It is the lascar who risks his life on the high seas that makes the ship-owner a knight or a Baron. It is the journeyman that works all day long in the workshop that elevates the proprietor to the position and dignity of a captain of Industry. Thus the Land-lord the Ship-owner, the Commercial-magnate and the Captain of Industry are all made by those that toil and moil all day and lead the life of a dog. The socialist naturally asks, how long shall this continue? How long shall the poor live on the doles of the rich? How long shall the worker be a hewer of wood and drawer of water without himself having a roof to live under, or the facilities of a full bath every day?

These are legitimate questions, but when they are asked in India, they come without a certain reality, though with an amount of irresistible force. In India we imitate the west, we copy its grave distempers and seek to apply its impotent remedies. Every upheaval in India is a poor and antiquated imitation of an earlier

upheaval of England. The Industrial age began in England at the close of the 18th century. Economics soon developed into a noteworthy factor in politics. From being merely a source of political influence it soon developed into a political issue. In England this politico-economic upheaval has distinct landmarks and by a strange coincidence we notice that these upheavals have their reflexes in India as well. The 19th century witnessed the rise of the Liberals in England, in other words of Free-Traders. Thus the political phraseology is soon to be directly related to an Economic issue. As Industrialism soon developed the middle classes became influential and rose from the position of retail traders to that of 'wholesale merchants'. They acquired political influence, built up a political party and obtained a fairly wide extension of franchise in 1832, the year which witnessed the passing of the Charter Act of India by which were assured equal rights to Indians and Europeans in this country. In 1857 the working classes of England asserted their claims in big Industrial centres, at any rate, to Franchise; in India the people wanted to throw out the foreign yoke in 1857 and having failed in their attempt made that yoke ever more heavy. The next instalment was in the year 1884 in which the agricultural labourers of England won their Civic rights. In India the Indian National Congress took its birth in 1885. In 1917 Russia established the Soviet Republic. India seeks Home Rule in the same year and fast develops its demand for Swaraj in 1921. Thus while England is making rapid

strides toward real democracy India is slowly striving to emancipate herself from alien domination. The political movements of India are thus the reflexes of simultaneous economic upheavals in Europe. While England is making rapid strides in Economics, India is hanging on to the apron strings of the English politics of the mid-victorian era.

Is it any wonder then that to-day we should feel charmed by the stories of emancipation that reach us from Russia? But imitation carries us no-where. The socialism of England is the protest against the tyranny of her new-born Industrialism. The Communism of Russia is the inevitable consequence of centuries of Despotism. Rule. Armed and bloody revolution against autocracy has been the ruling factor of all history—ancient or modern. Whether it has paid the revolutionaries whether it has initiated a new millennium, whether it has improved the social and economic lot of those for whose good rivers of blood have flown is a matter of grave doubt. If every revolution had its desired result it would not necessitate its successors. Before therefore a revolutionary plan and propaganda are undertaken, whether on the plane of violence, or of non-violence, it behoves those that are willing to sacrifice their all in the interests of the suffering masses to consider whether and how far a particular programme is designed to achieve the contemplated results.

In India it should obviously be our duty to study the principles of the distribution of land, the share of

the State in its revenues, the obligations of the State to the subjects, the organization of national life, in towns and villages, the structure of society in its social and economic aspects, the ideals of learning and wealth placed by the ancient lawgivers and the founders of Religion before the people of the land, the degeneration that has overtaken the country under the onslaughts of foreign invasions, the multifaceted nature of British conquest of India, the responsibility of the West for the degradation of the East, the fleeting character of the modern influences, the need to restore the abiding principles of which ancient Indian society was founded, the resuscitation of the healthy age-long doctrine of production for consumption the scheme of self-sufficiency rural, district and provincial and nation-wide which India had enjoyed till recently, the havoc committed by the house-to-house hawking of Western goods from needle and thread to ribbon and hairpins in the village homes, the destruction of the village crafts, the absolute dependence of India and her 700,000 villages to-day on imported goods from the West, from dawn to dusk,—all these merit the careful study of the Socialist or any other *ist* before he applies the ready-made doctrine of Western Socialism or any other *ism* to the task of reforming the social order of the East. This is really a shorter cut to the ideal of the socialist than the course he adopts, because the longest path is really the shortest way home. Thank Heavens, industrialism with all its horrors has not yet penetrated or permeated the country. There are but a

million and half Industrial 'hands' and if we wake up betimes, we may in time check the flood tide of this invasion of machinery which is a good servant but a bad master. We have a separate chapter enough for tackling this vast subject but let it be taken for granted that whatever advantages machinery may have—and they are numerous—it has enslaved the people, destroyed human skill, invaded the privacy of the home and disturbed the morals of the family, crippled the creative genius of the craftsman and killed his personality as well as independence. It has introduced international complications by rousing a sense of competition where the spirit of co-operation should have ruled their inter-relations and kindled a spirit of imperialism with its attendant horrors of industrialism and militarism. It has annihilated time and distance and has brought nearer the countries of the world but thrown apart the nations one from the other. It has brought together the bodies but rent asunder the hearts and souls of the people.

A right issue in the right time carries a fight really far but a wrong issue diverts our course from the destination. We fight against capitalism and we ought to. This capitalism such as it is in India is largely created by Western Commerce behind which lie the cohorts of the Western powers. In the measure in which we assail Indian capitalism, in that measure repurcussions of our attack affect the wider interests of the foreigner lying behind it. Therefore we antagonize the foreign ruler and create a motive for the rich man

in India to join hands with the foreigner. We are directly promoting an unholy alliance between the giant British capitalist and the pigmy Indian capitalist in order that they may jointly crush the socialist and the swarajist alike who come as the friends of the poor at a time when the poor really stand to gain by an immediate relaxation if not removal of the incubus of foreign domination. Our methods therefore defeat our objects for thereby the third party's power is consolidated instead of being weakened. Is there not enough time and enough strength for the socialist to settle up affairs with the Indian capitalist after he has settled with the foreigner? Whether in the fulness of time the socialist pursues Satyagraha or the time-honoured methods of social economic and political struggle, his strength will be unassailable.

Let us Indianise our ideal of socialism. Socialism is good and unchallengeable. We cannot any longer put up with the greed of the land-lord or the vagaries of his feudal hierarchy. We cannot any longer tolerate the distinctions of high and low related to birth, we cannot any longer agree to keeping a fifth of the population under bondage to the remaining four-fifths of their fellow creatures. We must dispel the demon of drink and destroy the monster of untouchability. But we must also ensure them the poor victims a square meal throughout the year. Let us support the crafts and the arts of the village. What availeth it to the down-trodden poor if we raise loud cries of socialism and buy foreign goods every moment of our lives? Let

us not bury our poor brethern with sympathy and slogans, but keep them alive by helping them earn a few annas or even pies. Let us once again turn our vision from the West to the East from competition to co-operation, from force to good-will, from matter to spirit, from the steering wheel to the spinning wheel and we shall have given proofs of our sincerity in professing to serve the poor in our country. The socialist will win the moment he has a programme of day-to-day work which brings tangible relief to the poor. The common cry of "aggravate suffering in the starving order to kindle in them a spirit of revolution" is unreasonable, apart from being heartless. It is therefore a tragedy to witness socialist preaching against Khaddar and Village Industries and advising people to take to mill cloth and foreign cloth. "Workers of the world, unite, for you have nothing to lose but your chains" is a splendid dictum, but what should we say if half the workers of the world are uniting to bind the other half with unbreakable chains of industrial and economic slavery? The Socialist means well, but let him do nothing which would make the rich richer and the poor poorer. Neither the socialist nor the Congressman can make good except with the co-operation of the masses. And co-operation is but the outward expression of a feeling of confidence generated within. Let us do nothing which will impair the little confidence that we have created in the masses by long years of service and suffering. Slogans do not fill stomachs anymore than votes and the power of socialism duly co-ordinated to

the tradition of the country and the foundations of the society to which it is made applicable will be irresistible when its programme is a programme of action resulting in a tangible alleviation of suffering and sorrow in this woebegone land.

## CHAPTER II

### WHY FEAR SOCIALISM ?

*Fear* is the enemy of freedom. It is the foster mother of cowardice and with cowardice come abjectness and servility. Fear also indicates weakness and makes for conservatism for one would not then have the courage of one's convictions. One would feel under it that change must be resisted and abhorred. Why-because one would be afraid of its consequences. The man of courage welcomes change as the harbinger of progress, not that all change must be progressive, but that there can be no progress without change and he who fears change naturally is content either to vegetate or to retrogress. After all, even the conservative mind cannot get away from its own traditions. The traditions of a country or civilisation are the link between the bygone past and the ever receding future. In them are embedded the rich and inestimable experiences of our forebears. But traditions themselves have changed from epoch to epoch and era to era. Have we not all read in our Itihasas of the cycles of times the revolution of ages, the change of Yugas beginning with *Kritha* and ending with *Kali* and the cycle repeating itself ? Of course the intervals of time are long—too long for the handy foot-rule and compact measure tape of the modern age. The single cycle of these four Yugas or a Mahayuga covers, 38,93,033 years and we

have covered according to our tradition 155 trillions of years (155,52,195,58,85,033 years) since the beginning of Brahma) and according to the Western calculations as the Earth age 200 crores of years. Would it not be a little extravagant to claim that life and society have remained unchanged during these crores and *Nirbudams* and *Arbudams* of years? In our own day during a decade, we have witnessed changes which might have according to the rate of previous progress, covered centuries. How much then should the world have changed through this fraction of a vast eternity?

If, in the Kritha Yuga, there was no buying and selling, no profit and loss, no master and servant, no riches and poverty and from that Utopian state we have degenerated into our present lot, is it not a commendable proposition that we should earnestly seek one day to ascend to Kritha, even as we have descended to Kali? And such an ascent such an evolution,—what is it but a stride toward socialism—a term, more abused for the name than for what the name implies. It is sometimes necessary to interpret modern ideas in terms of ancient phraseology and our aversion to what is new would abate when we recognised that whatever is called new is really a misnomer of things familiar things old, things ancient. Let us not therefore, abhor socialism much less fear it. Let us study its content and see whether, after all, it would not when duly sublimated, re-echo some of the deeper sentiments lying hidden in our own hearts and seeking or even struggling for an adequate expression to the outer world. Do we not all

give alms in our houses to the maimed and the lame, the blind and the dumb, to the lepers and cripples, to the decrepits and even the wandering bands of professional beggars? Charity has become so deeply ingrained in the nation that it is considered un-Indian to turn away a mendicant, and the child's emotions are trained and nurtured by a well directed initiation of them into acts of daily charity at the gate of the Indian Home. What lies at the root of this age-long, deep-rooted, widespread, national custom? It is but the rendering into daily practice of the prayers of the Hindus with which the *swasthi vakyams* conclude the Parayanams of Indian Epics—*Lokah samasthah sukhino bhavanthu* and *serve janah sukhino bhavanthu*! A sense of universal brotherhood, a close concern for the well-being of the fellow-men—these have regulated the social structure of the Hindus and Socialism rather than nationalism constitutes the foundation of Indian society. If, therefore, to-day, considering the marked degradation which society has suffered in its pursuit of wealth and power, the reformer reminds his countrymen of the larger duty which is suffering neglect at their hands, we need not discover in them strange spectres, which we cannot dispel or fantastic ghosts that we must fear.

Socialism is not the armoury put on by the rich to protect themselves against the attacks of the poor. Nor is the mendicant bowl which the poor send round for doles from the rich. In the West, it is the reaction against the capitalism which has succeeded a feudal age through the progress of machinery. In india the

onslaughts of capitalism may not have been as disastrous as in the West but the effects of Feudalism have not been less devastating. Indian society which was reared for ages on a well-balanced regulation of wealth and power and has successfully eliminated unemployment has, through a thousand years of foreign rule and two centuries of contact with Western civilisation during the acme of its industrialism based upon application of power presented to us thinking men and women of the land problems as serious as those brought to the fore in any capitalistic country. Be the causes what they may—and they are numerous—the problems of economics confronting us show all the complexities of a materialistic civilisation and all the drawbacks of a weakend socio-religious foundation of society.

The outlandish ideals of the materialistic civilisation—these alone are sufficient causes for the retrogression of society. They constitute the seed which has been broadcast on a favourable soil. How has this soil been made favourable and what is it in the first place? The weakend hold of the ancient socio-religious root principles on society has provided a suitable soil, having led to the disappearance of the natural heads of society who could influence its component factors for good or for evil. That headship has quietly and imperceptibly passed on to the Western rulers, who have not had either the opportunity or the possibility of judging India's needs or judging the appropriateness of the wares they have been supplying to meet these needs. The mental condition of the people in India—notably of

those trained in Western education—became therefore, a fit soil for the greediness and love of money inculcated by the materialistic ideals of the West for the middle class folks of India. When the seed and the soil have suited each other, and the weather conditions have been favourable, the result has been a luxuriant growth—not of the indigenous virtues well balanced between wealth and power, but of the out-landish ideals of a concentration of both. Money has thus come to rule society, service being no longer the vital and operative force in life. When, therefore, the socialist—charged with the dynamic ideology of the West—presents and pursues ideals meant to equalise opportunities and redress the ill-balance between the good and evil things of the world, the English educated aristocracy of India along of course with India's own and ancient aristocracy of wealth is aghast; and with upraised hands, invokes the curses of Government upon the poor reformers whose ideals cannot be challenged, whatever may be said about the processes of achievement countenanced or held in view by them.

What, then, shall we do? Shall we sit with folded hands showering imprecations upon the zealous, if misguided, advocates of more righteous and equitable basis of society or shall we turn up the frontiers of our traditions, re-examine the foundations of our society and adjust once again its ancient and effete principles to the changed and ever changing modern conditions? To engage ourselves in such a task would be helpful in reconstructing India on abiding principles. In other

words, the future demands that the present shall adapt itself to its environment. Such an adaptation requires openness to conviction, ~~susceptibility~~ to change and receptivity of new ideas. All these may really and in essence be a re-discovery of the past—but of a past attuned to the present and the future. If we may vary the language and make it more direct, the need of the hour is a dispassionate examination of the principles of socialism—not with a view to a wholesale copying of the slogans and shibboleths of foreign countries, but to hitting out “ancient solutions of modern problems” as Lala Bhagwandas would say and fashion India’s destiny on Indian lines.

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## CHAPTER III

### SOCIALISM—PREVENTIVE AND CURATIVE

Society is an organisation and like all organisms it is subject to its own metabolism. Accordingly the social order must change like the structure and the functions of the human body. The change may be from within or from without. The former is growth by intussusception the latter by accretion. In the language of the work-a-day world, the one is brought about imperceptibly by a natural transformation of cells and tissues, the latter by violent influences or accretions from outside. Socialism is the science and art of bringing about this change. It is perhaps less the technique than the ideal. But to be effective it must be more than a state of mind and more than a mere attitude, though it would be less than an attainment. Socialism taken to its logical consequence, which is also a reasonable necessity in this case, is Communism but this may not be worked out without the play of violence which the Congress has eschewed. Socialism is ordinarily the homage that vice pays to virtue. That is why the virtuous poor get occasional support from the unvirtuous rich in their propaganda. Socialism, therefore, which is neither a practical dynamic programme, nor a quiet weaving of the web of equality across the warp of class differences in society must

remain an ineffectual restatement of elementary principles which under the inexorable force of violence is thrust upon a people as in Russia, or which under the unfailing influence of well-established tradition, have formed the foundation and plinth of a correct social order as in India. It is for us, therefore, to decide whether we shall change the existing social order by violent physical means, or by ineffectual, intellectual playfulness or by moral metabolic processes. The Congress has rejected the first and so have the Socialists of the day. The second is good but does not go far enough. Let us turn to the third, study our existing social order anew and realise the march of our progress so as to ensure food and raiment and leisure to all.

### **What Socialists should study?**

Again let it be noted that all movements of national uplift have their origin in and are directly traceable to the environment by which they are surrounded. It constitutes their background. It furnishes the data eqally for the reformer and the revolutionary on which they build up their movements of reconstruction. When they seek to perpetuate all that is good, noble and beneficent in the past they inaugurate movement of renaissance when on the other hand, they destroy all that is evil, mean and vicious in the national tradition, they work for a revolution. When, therefore, the Socialist of the modern times emphasizes the need for planning the edifice of society anew the less enthusiastic

and more sedate elements have a right to ask whether the changes proposed have taken due note of the good and evil in the existing order of things and whether they comprise a co-ordinated effort to reconcile the conflicts that must necessarily exist between the past and the present, between east and west, between the national and the universal. It is thus that all Socialists must support their agitation and their demands by a study not only adequate but sympathetic of the data which form their back-ground but the picture itself must be well portrayed.

In order to understand this ideal of self-sufficiency it is necessary for us for one moment to survey the structure and functions of Hindu Society and see how its supports and safeguards, which ensured food and raiment to every member thereof, have been ruthlessly destroyed. To-day we find India cut up territorially, communally as well as professionally. The States are pitted against Provinces the Hindus against the Mohammedans, Sikhs, Christians and domiciled natives of India, the towns against villages and urban labourers against rural peasants. But this is the least of the fissiparous mischief that has been done to this ancient land. The very foundations of society have been destroyed imperceptibly. It has become fashionable to talk of self sufficiency following the example of Germany. Some of the provincial satraps of India have begun to talk of it glibly. But it has been little realized that this very self-sufficiency has been made the basis of Indian society for centuries, the village being made the

unit of national life—and a village of what composition? It is a village encompassing all the professions that make life full and enjoyable. All the crafts and professions that make for utility as well as beauty in life are represented therein. But the village of such a character and its magnificent products unfailing means of employment and guarantees of the primal needs of life have been destroyed by one touch of Western civilization through the petty and wholesale shops that have sprung up or through the pedlar and the hawker that infest the remotest corners of the country, with cheap and the tawdry wares of the West. In the aggregate the village barber using the German razors, the village carpenter using the imported wire nail have destroyed the smith's trade in the villages. The smith wearing the foreign cloth has destroyed the weaver's craft. The weaver wearing the Japanese shoe has destroyed the cobbler's calling, cobblers using the enamel plate and mug have destroyed the potter's profession, the potter frequenting the laundries has destroyed the dhoby's vocation. Each is thus destroying his neighbour's means of livelihood, when the village is destroying his neighbour's means of livelihood, when the village is destroyed there can be no self-sufficiency; rural or urban, there can only be national incompetence and widespread unemployment—problems which confront the Socialist of to-day. Problems too which have grown acute and almost insoluble in Western countries with the rapid growth of industrialism and militarism and their culmination in the great world-war of the recent

past and possibly greater world war of an immediate future.

It will be thus seen that corporate good and commonweal were the basis of Hindu society. This cult of communism of a sort was replaced altogether by the cult of individualism which really is the basis of exploitative capitalism. Indeed it is economic lawlessness despite the fact that it assumes the name of Joint Stock business. This cult of big business is really the creation of the Individualists. We make no apology for extracting the following note from "The Social Order" March 6th 1938.

"The principle of individualism whose operations have brought such disaster to the economic world was notably intensified as the industrial revolution of eighteenth century advanced. This principle is at the basis of modern capitalism. Its advocates hold for the full unhampered sway of nature and human liberty in the economic order. They set aside all intervention of Government in organisations in the production and distribution of goods.

"Law" the Individualists hold "is intended merely to assure the conditions which render the development of social life possible and these rest upon property whether employed in commerce or industry." Hence, arises the insistence on "property rights" over and above "human rights". Out of commerce and industry arise the relationship between man and man. Hence the one supreme effort of Government must be

to safeguard liberty of contract by which property rights are transferred. When the Government has insured liberty of contract, its work is done. Outside of this men are free to give full sway to their own interests and to their goading greed, no matter if the worker is underpaid, overworked, and oppressed.

“Individualism was the application to industrial life of Rousseau’s false principle that man being essentially good, had but to follow the tendencies of his nature. By this principle extortion, inhuman labour conditions, child labour, could all be made into acts of virtue. Under this principle competition would turn industry into the law of the jungle, the Darwinian struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. Under this principle man could dispense with his most sacred responsibilities. Individualism gave full scope for the aggrandisement of Individuals, the heaping up of large fortunes, the exploitation of the labourer, domination of weaker nations, provided only that contracts, including the labour contracts, were freely concluded and legally observed.

“As the noted sociologist Husselein pictures the scene in his Social Manifesto “Manufacture, produce, set all the wheels of industry in motion, enlarge your markets enrich your nation get wealth, wealth, wealth; the more the better!” that was the clamour of the economic doctrinaires of the time. Reduce the wages of the workers, extend the number of their hours, get all that the demand for jobs will make possible. Bring

in the wife and mother; chain to your machines the little children that their fingers, too, may learn to keep busy in producing wealth. There is no God in Heaven, and, if there were, your conscience need not reproach you! You are in fact contributing most nobly to the nation's wealth while properly amassing riches for yourself. The more the better You are a public benefactor. It is all for Labour's best as for your own Only thus can we achieve the perfect social harmony There is no labour problem."

"The trick worked and when Labour at home squirmed and shouted, it was thrown crumbs and silenced. Thereafter they hunted foreign lands for cheap raw materials and "free markets" and Imperialism was born. Exploitation now became easier for by clever hiding of the miseries of distant "Natives", the standard of living at home was more improved All this was done in the name of this immoral Individualistic cult."

We have to survive this narrow cult of selfishness or at any rate self-wardness and have to promote and foster the higher cult of common good. In this we have to fight Society and Government alike. Though we speak of Society and Government as two distinct factors, yet the fact remains that society being conquered in its moral and material economic and cultural aspects by a foreign government it is really only one force that must be combated. We have lost the confidence of society which has been converted to outlandish

ideals and the art of winning back public confidence is indeed a difficult task in the face of the propaganda that is being carried on by an interested Government which describes itself as the protector of the masses, which deprecates the Congress as being composed of irresponsible and self-seeking intelligentsia and finally spurns the Socialist workers engaged in an uphill and disinterested task as the paid mercenaries of distant Bolsheviks. Under a foreign Government even social reform becomes suspect as it engenders a spirit of revolt which may any day pass the boundaries of society and invade the domain of politics. Thus has a studied appraisal of the traditions of the past become impossible and impracticable between a suspicious and panic-stricken Government and the half-educated and denationalized middleclass intelligentsia. It is a common trait of human nature abjectly and pathetically to cling to the old or when the reaction sets in, to swing over to the other and decry all that is old in favour of anything that is new. We witness this spectacle in Russia. Russia's self-emancipation by the Revolution of 1917 beginning with the massacre of the Czar and his family and the experimentation for two decades with new plans and new programmes has in the younger folks of an admiring and wonder-struck world led to a spirit of frantic imitation here, there and elsewhere. But in the fullness of time and in our own day the pendulum which has swung from despotism to communism involving abolition of property, family and religion, has assumed a middle position in which the

time-honoured principles of democracy with a bicameral legislature rights of individual property and a regulated franchise, have superseded the short-lived dictatorship of the proletariat with all its uncanny and unpalatable attributes. We have not the patience — when a change is suggested for adoption or even presented as a practised reform to appraise our own existing conditions and estimate how far the intended innovations will fit into a well-established structure. No custom or institution however hoary with age or however much sanctified by tradition can help being challenged by the spirit of the changing times. “Percontra” no change, however attractive can be accepted without demur. These are but platitudes, but platitudes also embody truths which serve as guides to conduct in life. That is why India is now being called upon to choose between a wholesale acceptance on the one hand of measures and methods designed in the West to cure the evils which have followed the industrial revolution of the past century and a half, and on the other, a timely and sympathetic re-examination of the ancient solutions of modern problems bearing in mind all the while the pleasant fact that no solution which is ancient need be rejected on that ground, no problem which is modern need be deemed insoluble on this ground. When we have embarked upon this duty which is as arduous as it is healthy, we shall strive hard to adopt preventive measures instead of merely curative. A cure is good but prevention is better whether it be in the domain of bodily disease or disease of the body politic

and it is in this spirit that we plead for a study of the principles which have regulated the structure and functions of Hindu Society and the age-long methods by which they had abolished concentration of wealth if they did not abolish poverty by which too they had eliminated unemployment even if they could not have abolished under-employment.

## CHAPTER IV

### A CIVILISATION AT BAY

Broadly speaking the civilisations of the world may be studied under two classifications—those based on wealth and those based on culture or learning. It is usually said the Goddess of Wealth is somewhat fickle in her affections, while the Goddess of Learning is less so. There has been in Indian tradition an age-long conflict between the two Goddesses of Wealth and Learning and indeed this very conflict has been utilised as the basis of Indian civilisation. Wealth and learning have been kept apart here and the balance of power has been sustained in society by this compartmentalism. A civilisation so nurtured has been suddenly exposed to the onslaughts of a sister civilisation from the West, based on the ascendancy of wealth to which learning has been made sub-servient and in the acquisition of which it has been made an instrument

Many and varied have been the attacks on Indian civilisation in the past, but the last of the series has been so penetrating and pervasive that this ancient civilisation had in sheer self-defence turned to bay. India has suffered many onslaughts and survived many invasions. But easily the worst of these numerous attacks, and one which has almost had a deadly effect upon its individuality is traceable to the imperceptible—one had almost said—the insidious attack upon its

ancient culture, its civic laws and social institutions—yea, the very foundations on which the highly complex structure of Indian society has been reared. Few critics have the patience or the fairness to study a civilisation in ruins with sympathy and when sympathy dries up, understanding fails; and a criticism based upon want of both is bound to be largely based upon prejudice and prejudgment. No one can justify all the institutions, now thousands of years old, which were nurtured under conditions which no longer hold. Yet, if those institutions have to suffer changes, the progress at which they aim can be orderly and helpful only if there arise in each era and each epoch scholars and savants who can interpret the ancient institutions to posterity and unfold to them the vital and operative principles that had once shaped them

Let us rapidly rummage the numerous pages that make up this precious volume of our civilisation. Let us study them neither as tourists nor as historians but as students of psychology; for then alone we shall see the real co-ordination that exists between the forms of Government that have prevailed from time to time in India and the structure of Indian society as well as its ideals and aspirations. This is all the more necessary to the nation when every effort is being made to adopt or even recast the old civilisation so as to fit it into modern conditions. But this task is made difficult, because the shocks of successive invasions have so "tortured the country out of shape that the lines of

correct and true identity are discerned with the greatest difficulty" Another difficulty lies in avoiding the political theories of Western creation and the use of Western phrases and formulae in making a correct analysis of Indian political phenomenon. The task of so analysing the contents of a civilisation which has had, on the one hand, to readjust itself to a sister culture embraced by one fifth of its own members and, on the other, co-ordinate its own internal positions as between a fourth of its population under the states and an equal number of the so-called untouchables, has been made all the more complex by the presence of a foreign Government which countenances rather than counteracts the many conflicts that these conditions engender. But the task must be attempted "if a formulae has to be devised that would be acceptable to all and rouse the enthusiasm of all". The following legitimate questions may therefore be appropriately put to and answered by ourselves in this connection. "Is Indian Nationalism a demand for or a protest against Westernisation? Is the National Government to speed up or arrest the dissolution of Indian cultures? How shall we evolve a democratic form of a Government from a blend of an aristocratic culture like that of the Hindus or a Theocracy like that of Islam? Indians alone have to answer them and in so answering, interpret India for themselves and for the world Dr. Kunhi Kannan has attempted an interpretation of his own in these pages.

India is glibly talked of as a continent not a country. But what differentiates a country from a continent? Great Britain and Ireland are Islands "united by the ocean and separated by the sea." The Pyrenees and the Alps separate Spain from France and Italy from its northern neighbours. The Carpathians the Corinthian Mountains, are again mountain barriers between nations. All these have made up the continent of Europe dividing one nation from another. But in India no such impassable mountains have disturbed the fundamental unity of Indian culture and life, while the sub-nationalities that have sprung up have simply operated as the hyphens that unite rather than the dashes that divide, one language from another. These have come into being on account of the inevitable conditions of soil and climate, temperature and humidity. Nevertheless the joint family, the structure of the Indian home, the system of caste with its disciplinary and dynamic attributes, the Hindu religion with its wide receptivity, the Indian political evolution based upon the village community, which has co-ordinated individual interest with corporate well-being, the social and economic position of woman in Hindu society as the complement of man, not as his competitor, the aristocracy of India, not as a part of militaristic organisation but as an 'essential' of a scheme of life aiming at peace and goodwill to all, the artistic sense with its all pervasiveness in Indian life and society, education pursued for its own sake, not "as a hall-mark to vocations in life, nor as regimentation under rigid disciplines that ignore

personal aptitudes and poverty, which has been welcomed as an aid to spiritual progress and therefore ennobled and idealised life"—all these constitute the fundamental attributes of Indian home life and Indian national life. They have all suffered a rude shock both in their integrity and in their interpretation, and if the past should live in the present and the present should herald the future, the country would sorely need a reintegration and reinterpretation of these various institutions. We shall now briefly touch on each of these in the succeeding paragraphs in language as far as possible of the authors.

The joint family system is the *bete noire* of Hindu society. That it makes for utter fragmentation of property and wastage of productive effort, that it prevents accumulation of capital and inhibits large scale enterprise are the general charges levelled against it. Perhaps they are true in a sense to-day but our duty is to study the genesis of the system. How did this singular institution take its rise in India and constitute the most striking feature of the Indian civilisation? Land was abundant in those days and labour was scarce, while life was simple and wants were few. Hired labour was unknown and was out of tune with the abundance of nature and the simple life of the people. Labour was the capital and the male members of a joint family provided the sole source of labour. Capital had to be conserved—that is joint family had to be kept intact. China in a measure and Austria in part exhibit this

system. It was not merely ancestral worship and the family deity and strong bonds of consanguinity that fostered the system. They had doubtless their share. Apart from the economic aspect, there is a social aspect of the problem. The softening of the angularities of temperament and habit, the restraint on youthful impetuositities the subordination of self to others, the tenderness for the sick and the disabled are the social and ethical attributes which have followed in the wake of this system. The mother played her own part in conserving the health and happiness of her married daughters and redressing the inequalities inevitable among daughters married to different families. The system fostered a spirit of equality which made full allowances for differences in temperament, in aptitude and in moral and physical endowments. Besides, the joint family affords the best training in the humanities, helping to develop understanding and cultivate emotions. It is the university of life, where training is afforded in almost every branch of human development. Its abolition is a thing to be regretted though perhaps it cannot be avoided, because in the words of the author "The spirituality of India, its deep humanism and the tranquillities of life would be things of the past." These tolerances which have helped different communities to live together on a policy of "live and let live" would be no more. Castes and communities which spiritualised sympathy and have enabled people to live in peace and amity for forty centuries would come into collision with each other in a universal upheaval, and India

becomes as homogeneous as any of the countries of the West.

Then, again, the Indian Home which is the centre of Indian Nationalism and from which radiate a myriad healthy influences has suffered as much as the Joint family in its integrity. It were unnecessary to go into the details of its domestic aspects. The system of marriage, the sense of reserve, and dignity maintained by Indian women, the grafting of the Indian wife to new family, the wider plan of uniting not merely two souls but two families through wedlock, the scrupulous regard for economy, sanitation and artistic achievement, the dominating idea of marriage as parentage, the place of pilgrimages and vows in the spiritual outfit, of each individual, the sense of mutual subordination between husband and wife, which forms the basis of mutual regard and constitutes the key to the lock of mutual affection, the treatment of guests as gods, the weaving of sanitary wefts into religious warps, the observance of pollution and the invariable love of order, arrangement and beauty—these are the aspects of the Indian Home which give to the jewel its resplendence.

If the Home is consolidated by the Joint family, society is consolidated by the system of caste, which has been hastily condemned "as a giant octopus with its tentacles deep into the vitals of the Hindu Society" to-day the talk of the tyranny of the caste and the petrification of the Hindu society, makes one doubt

whether this ancient institution, hoary with age and sanctified by time, has ever served any useful purpose. Yet, when we recognise how the Aryans invaded not as one body in successive hordes, we can realise how the religious bond alone would keep in union and concord communities whose rural pursuits had dissolved away the tribal bonds. Even as the Joint family originated from economic necessity and was idealised on the basis of ancestral worship; caste too came in due course to be likewise idealised and, therefore, has obscured the essential foundations on which it was built up. Such idealisation became inevitable in order to give an element of permanency to human relationship based on submission rather than on agreement. Indeed the four main divisions of the Hindus are not so much castes as classes—the same classes that have arisen under like conditions all the world over. The rigidity of caste is somewhat exaggerated. For, the process of submissions and exclusions have been refined to a degree. The Indian caste is really a brotherhood of which the members, however varying in point of wealth, are equal. Owing to the sense of equality, it is that members of any caste sit together as equals at dinners and ceremonies.

A second consequence of the democratic spirit is a certain uniformity in the standards of life, leading to a spirit of co-operation and mutual helpfulness amongst them. The inter-caste jealousies of to-day are a modern phenomenon and were not in existence in pre-British

days. Caste has led to self-control divorced wealth from learning, and obviated the tyranny which flows by their combination. It has perfected the onflow of hereditary skill and the genius of the craftsmen and eliminated all educational wastage. "Education itself has through this system been made to depend upon a personal touch between the Guru and Sishya, who were oftentimes the father and the son and has been fostered through traditional knowledge, associations and anecdotes having a wide range of appeal, not merely pervading the intellect but filtering down to become the part of personality. Thus have resulted the monumental temples of the South, massive in structure, conceived in broad peaks and wide curves and executed with a dash and daring that alike baffle time and stagger imagination. Thus, too have sprung up the works of Art of the North of astonishing beauty with their marvellous delicate carving and decorative effort. Money was no element of consideration, time was no essence of contract; the cheap and tawdry upholstery of the West, the system of tenders, contracts and commissions are unknown to caste and intolerable to its spirit. Caste is a dynamic force enjoining a sense of duty rather than a right, promoting sympathies and suppressing selfishness. There was no incessant work or any lack of leisure. Caste exercised a certain scrutiny over the obligations of the Joint family, and the purity and selflessness enforced under it. The individual might always be trusted to follow a course of life in harmony with the ideals of society. The jealousies and covetous-

ness of competition did not complicate the field of effort and action under caste which always lay clean and well-defined. To-day caste has ceased to be an emanation of the Divine and become a dry formula on dead men's lips.

Let us next turn to India's religion. Hinduism is not a simple and clear faith but a vast miscellany of creeds and superstitions holding together within its fold races in varying stages of intellectual, moral and spiritual level. A principle of unity had to be discovered to hold together in one quality these races and creeds and the result was a "social theory and an economic doctrine which reconcile conflicting interests and gave to the conglomeration of Indian races the beauty and symmetry of a mosaic nourished and growing together in a common matrix of philosophy. Hinduism is not merely a religion, it is a civilisation, it is a mode of life," *God is one but the sages called it by various names.* That supplies the key to the gates of Hindu pantheon. It is therefore, doing but the barest justice to say, as the author says, that the profound speculations of the Upanishads are due to the resolve of the Aryans to find a unity underlying the faiths and superstitions to which they resolved upon giving recognition. The pantheism of the Upanishads exhibiting one limitless chain of graded perfection and the doctrine of reincarnation contemplating a limitless series of births and rebirths and the doctrine of Karma satisfying all the requirements of Hindu social arrangements—these underlie the Hindu religion. The motive

to action is not popular esteem and public approval but a spirit of self-sacrifice and self-denial alike in family and in society. An elaboration of rites and ceremonies did doubtless spring up as also an elaborate symbolism, but this was inevitable in the presence of undeveloped tribes. Nevertheless the Aryan religion was based upon certain eternal and universal truths, while forms and formulae were but accessories. It is often said that Hinduism is an all absorbing religion. So it was; for it had to receive, absorb and assimilate the crude beliefs of the Aryans so as to make them subserve by their refinement, the higher truths they themselves believed in. "Thus was it that Kali, the fierce looking Goddess as she was, was made the vehicle of sublime and difficult philosophy! Buddhism had its conflicts with Hinduism, but the latter had soon re-asserted itself and at the same time carried with it the imperceptible influences of the former. A series of reformers came into existence and the process of reformation is going on to-day before our very eyes. The East is a temple in which the worshipper worships without seeing the vision of God. "There the reservoir of spiritually is {never empty." The future is only a repetition of the past with suitable modifications.

To say that the Indian civilisation is purely religious or philosophical in its outlook is to ignore the stress that our ancestors laid upon the economic development of society. Really economics shaped society and society was made stable by religion. Thus it was

that the village organisation and the growth of the village communities became an inseparable part of a socio-economic structure with a background of religion. The village community of India is not really a village republic nor is it a link in the chain of Feudalism such as prevailed in the West, majorities and minorities being concepts, unknown to our ancestors. The village assemblies simply enforced obligations rather than asserted rights, and obligations or duties always tend to codify themselves. They constitute the tradition of the country, the amour propre of caste, the wisdom of the elders which are enough to guide the younger generation. There is a heap of duties to perform, even as there is a heap of grain to share. Dr. Kunhi Kannan is not ever-partial to ancient India. He recognises the limitations of the village communities. The King's authority in the village was limited by his sense of "Dharma", and if the villagers did not accept a change they could pray and protest and as a last resort desert the village and abandon its lands. The village was a composite unit, which was dealt with as a whole by the king and where it is united, the king had to yield. The vision of the village was doubtless circumscribed, but that was the result of a clear demarcation between the sphere of the village and the sphere of the king. The feudalism of the West has never been a factor of Indian civilisation. That feudalism was based upon the military needs of the king, leading in due course to the establishment of a graded slavery from which, equally in due course, revolts arose. Thus was the

freedom movement generated by the battle-fields of Runnymede, thus was the Magna Carta wrested, thus had King Charles the First was beheaded. But in India where the king ruled according to Dharma and undertook the task of protection against aggressors, the castes went on with their own Dharma, with no mutual interference from above or from outside, leading a full life and a peaceful life at that, irrespective of the wars of aggression or defence of their kings. People paid their taxes and did their duty to the king. The king offered in turn his protection to the people. The king was besides the patron of arts and literature. The people were in turn the custodians of craftsmanship and culture. They were the complements of each other, not competitors with each other. There was no race for power between them, nor any rivalry in commerce.

In India, individualism of a chastened and purified type, has played a part unlike in the West, for the State never exercised the same authority over the whole field of individual life here as elsewhere. The duties of men have been all along prescribed by the dictates of caste without any external impression of authority. The motive for action is from within and caste has eliminated the cramping influences of mechanical regulations. "It is not by the intellectual grasp of issues at stake but by the spontaneity of common impulses that caste sprang to action." It not only sprang to action but also purified the impulses and elevated the

motives of individual action. Both in education and in religious worship, it is the individual that is seeking light and leading. Congregational worship or congregational study was unusual if not unknown. Hindu prayers, we are told, are intended for spiritual rather than moral strength. "Therefore, it is not the place and time that counted but the impulse that must spend itself fully and immediately in prayer" Likewise, charity is individual not congregational, given as much for the benefit of the donor as for the donee. There is an ardent desire to come into contact with suffering and distress, which alone can keep alive the sentiments of charity. The fee of the physician or of the pupil or of the juggler is not graded by a scale. A deep sense of individual gratitude is cherished for services received and is anxious to repay them by services rendered in turn and not by a word of thanks.

In the domain of literature, India lags behind no other country. The many problems of human life and existence the culture that seeks to give proportion and balance to human endeavour and helps one to understand the viewpoint of the opponent, receive their due attention. But as is to be expected in India, literature has a religious note accompanied by a great deal of ethical teaching as well. Neither the restraint of womanhood nor of servitude prevents the characters from preaching Dharma to those that ought to know better. "The religious note is well balanced by the beauty of the teaching. The universality of its, appeal,

its equipose of thought and the appropriateness of its setting. Western life is always abounding in struggle, created by upheavals of new interests and collisions of classes or individuals. In the East, the solutions of life's problems are more or less abiding. The West creates evils and finds remedies. Thus it is that Drama and novel alike deal with social evils which are dissected and shown up in all their nakedness in the West. In the caste system, however there is not the same necessity to turn up every now and then the frontiers of society, so that new situations demanding new formulæ arise but rarely. "The abundance of human feeling is in striking contrast to the scarcity of a conflict of wills. The ever present sense of the immanence of God helps to restrain and control the display of human passion which compels from the West fuller and yet fuller expression. To the Hindu, "nature and man pulsate with the same life." Bird and beast are represented as having the same sentiments and affections as man. There is doubtless an element of exaggeration in the portrayal of finer emotions. But let it be remembered that life in India is one in which the main endeavour is the culture of emotion rather than the will. The religious motive is supreme, when Bhishma vows his celibacy or shows his enemy how to hit him. The whole of Indian literature, it is pointed out, is pervaded with an atmosphere of exacting idealism which demands of man conduct of the highest ethical perfection, devoid of selfishness and answering for all time.

When we come to study the position of Indian woman, the author shows how the woman in ancient India occupied a position of equality with man, married generally after puberty, chose her own husband and could remarry on becoming a widow. She could study the Vedas and could move freely amongst men. But in due course the Aryan mind had to struggle hard against antagonistic forces, the contact with less civilised tribes as well as the impact of Buddhism tended to place woman in an exceedingly false position. The advent of Muslims operated to impede the even march of progress, while the contact with the British has violently affected Hindu Society. The growth of Society by an adaptation of the customary law to the growing changes has been effectively prevented by the British. "The theories of perpetual tutelage of limited estates, incapacity for contracts, the priority of male heirs of even the fourth degree, and the enforcement of conjugal rights were the consequences of a policy that sought to override custom and usage when they were in conflict not with the school of Hindu Law for the time prevailing but with an earlier authority" In ancient India, woman drew on her vast reservoirs of spirituality and would give no trouble on her own account to man. But the rapid march of events in which ancient institutions have been dissolved, has driven both man and woman from the moral to the legal plane. There is a conflict to-day as to whether the status of woman should or should not be secured by invoking the aid of Law through the medium of

legislatures controlled by a foreign Government. In the cauldron of Indian nationalism with its burning fires underneath and boiling contents within, none is worse tossed about than the Indian women.

But whatever may have been the measure of Indian woman's fall from the high social pedestal she once occupied, the fact remains that she has been the one sole factor that has preserved Indian nationalism in all its beauty and integrity. Art lies at the back of all nationalism and if the Indian home is essentially artistic, the credit must go to the Indian woman. The East looks upon the world as transient, the West as abiding. The West therefore wants to remodel it after new patterns. To the East death is but the door-way to a new life. To the West, therefore, the world appeals in its reality and the realities of the world appear in their physical form. The Easterner, on the contrary idealises them. That is the difference that is noticeable between the art-life of the East and the West. "The realism of the West does not find a place in Indian art, indeed could not satisfy a people who looked upon phenomenal existence as illusory." Once this distinction is understood, the divergent forces of Eastern and Western art become readily imaginable. We shall not dwell further upon this beyond quoting one sentence from the author. "The lion rampant of the Western artist, however well-drawn, depicts in full detail a particular mood, which the spectator may or may not appreciate and leaves his imagination no

scope. To us that art is best which does not tie the mind to the form bodied forth," and what helps the individual to draw on his own fancy or imagination in his own way-is more enduring. The essentially religious character of Indian art has given rise to the growth of symbolism which has tended to become more and more elaborate, and symbolism has thus served the collateral purpose of sublimating the cruder beliefs of communities outside the Aryan fold. It will be thus seen that in portraying one's emotions, abundance of detail is developed which tends to make the central idea become fugitive, not easily perceived by all, and to counteract this drawback the artist is perforce committed to a certain artistic exaggeration. Exaggerations are as inevitable when feelings have to be pictured as they are unwarranted when realities are to be described. Here again Indian art is tossed about in its renaissance between the old and the new, between the East and the West, between faithfulness to one's own and patronage through imitation of other's.

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## CHAPTER V

### GANDHISM OR SOCIALISM ?

The history of the world has been fashioned by the application of new ideas to changing times, each century having its dominant note which supplies the key to a real understanding of the currents of national life coursing long during its progress. We also note that the ideas and the ideals operating in one clime or one age have rapidly spread to other climes and other ages without subjecting the latter to all the vicissitudes that had befallen the former. In our own day we notice how kaleidoscopic and quick are the changes in the thoughts and feelings of people in different countries and continents. The instances before our eye are too many and too patent to require any enumeration or even illustration.

#### **Socialism in the West.**

Let us, however, take up one of these ideas, which is directly germane to our purpose. Socialism was at one time a heresy or even a fantasm. To ward off its onslaughts on the time-honoured and traditional institutions various countries have adopted various devices, thereby only moderating the vehemence of its ideals, but not resisting for all time the flow of its tide. While in England socialism has remained a benevolent idea which, instead of engulfing the old basis of society

and economics, has nearly been engulfed by them, it has had its undoubted effects upon English Society; but no one will say that the English nation has been wholly transformed in its economic policies or political principles. In Russia, on the other hand, socialism has been worked out to its logical conclusions, and the repercussions of such a sudden and violent transformation of conditions have reached every point of the world in spite of the high barriers erected.

Socialism has thus remained in England, as Bertrand Russel himself admits, a tendency rather than a definite goal and the labour movement itself, though it effects to be socialistic in outlook, has not been seriously opposed except on the basis of party system in politics. It has ennobled, doubtless, manual labour, and created intellectual and political opportunities to those who hitherto were only known to the movement as 'hands' — and not 'heads' or 'hearts.' It has further engendered a certain creative joy too — but there it has stopped bringing little hope to the unemployed or little happiness to the employed. There is a growing tendency in the West towards state-socialism, but here again only masters change. The labourer slaves nevertheless and it has been well said that instead of bringing increase of self-direction it only causes increase of mutual interference. In any case that pride of work and that pleasure of creative energy which the worker craves for is denied to him in all the temporizing schemes of socialism, whether they be the

co-operative movement, syndicalism or state socialism, which have been devised to fight the evils which capitalism has brought in its train in the West.

It is now well and widely known that socialism in the West is but the reaction against the combination of conditions that rule the social and economic life of the people. The laws of property and inheritance which enjoins the principle of primogeniture have created a class of young men who are the eldest sons of the family enjoying opulence and leisure and adding to their wealth, laying by capital, and bent upon exploitation and Empire-building. Wealth they have in abundance and ambition they have in plenty; while the junior sons of the families, turned adrift on society, have served as effective instruments to carry out the schemes of exploitation hatched by their wealthy and ambitious seniors. Thus has come into existence a small class of aristocrats and a large class of democrats—a system of capitalism and industrialism as the two sides of the same picture as the direct consequence, indeed, of the social system of the land.

### **Class distinctions intensified.**

On the economic side, the sequence of events is even plainer still. The invention of the steam engine and the application of power to production and manufactures have made the Western nations the foremost people in the world to monopolize trade, to explore markets, to subjugate nations and to build up a system

of imperialism based upon supremacy in commerce and armaments. Organization—both intensive and extensive organization—alike in peace and war, has led to the capture of the world's trade and territories, showing itself now as industrialism and now as militarism. This has led to the rise of a system in which more is given unto him that hath, and, from him that hath, not, the little he hath is taken away. Hence the rising places of the West-end, soaring high into the heavens and the stinking slums of the East-end with their grovelling poverty. Unemployment has increased, as the gospel of production for export cannot always be sure of a continuous patronage. The War had upset the pre-existing conditions and a spirit of revolt came over the nations of the West.

England with her usual circumspection has erected various bulwarks to stem the tide of Labour, Trade Unions and Socialism. In fact, the history of the Labour movement during the past half a century of its existence portrays the shrewd methods by which England—the Westernmost nation of Europe and easily the most conservative of the world's nations—has fought socialism by making timely concessions—such as adult franchise, recognition of Trade Unions, concessions to strikes, old age pensions, maternity benefits, sick insurance, heavy succession duties, surcharges, capital levy and finally, unemployment doles. These concessions have now reached the limit so far as the people at large are concerned, while the top-notch people, leaders

who swore by the shibboleths of socialism, have ended by being absorbed into the fold of conservatism. England is on the eve of a great change. Whether that will establish Fascism or Communism is more than we can tell. But the state of things deserves careful watching.

### **Continental Dictatorships.**

While the reaction in England against the evils of Industrialism has taken this not disagreeable turn with its numerous palliatives, the nations of the Continent have adopted destructive processes of a less conservative and more radical character. Hitler has started with socialism and established a Dictatorship in order to force the pace of Industrialism with suitable reforms. Italy has adopted a course not remote from a dictatorship under cover of monarchy, but through institutions which do not work through that violence that characterizes Hitlerism. Russia has gone one step further and annihilated the Czar and his family, abolished property and private foreign trade and is running Government with a party whose membership is not a hundredth of its population. But the aim is nevertheless to make Russia self-contained and the methods adopted are those of Industrialism without its obnoxious features. In every case, therefore, the changes introduced during the 20th century both in the social and the economic systems of the various nationalities of Europe are a direct result of,—yea, a direct reaction

against—the time honoured systems in vogue in those countries. People have suffered long and suffered much and they have revolted.

It will be seen from these facts that in every country, where socialism or some *ism* has raised its head, it is the direct consequence of a state of social and economic conditions which have led to the rise of such a move. In most places the movement arose out of sheer despair and the discontent of the people has been fashioned by a certain idealism into a finer type of social structure and economic organisation which was perhaps little contemplated in the incipient stages of the movement itself. In India too there are similar discontents all over the land and therefore, the remedies that readily suggest themselves to the easy critic appear to be just those that have come into being amongst the nations of the West.

### **Conditions in India.**

But when we examine our own conditions somewhat in detail, it will not be difficult to realise that there are wide and vital differences, between the conditions in the West to which the movements of revolt owe their origin and those in the East (India) against which we are seeking like remedies. We have not the industrialism of the West in our country. After all, in the whole of India, the population that is attached to the various mills and factories in all the cities is a

million and a half against a total population of 350 millions, of whom nearly 9/10ths are agricultural in their occupation. Even the industrial workers of Bombay are, in part, an agricultural population emanating from the villages of the province, and the Wheatly Commission have seen the advantage of such a mixed training, though it must be admitted from the purely industrial point of view that an arrangement like this constitutes a double-edged weapon.

However that be, the fact remains that about nine-tenths of the people still live in the villages with their destinies closely intertwined with those of the villages in which they live. While this is so, these are the problems of the cities, doubtless, that loom large in the political horizon. But when new movements are being inaugurated it will be as well to appraise the realities of the situation instead of being carried away by the sights and spectacles that meet the eye foremost in our review. The wise critic would pause to scan the conditions of society and judge for himself how far the remedies proposed fit in with the pre-existing state of things.

In the West, we have noticed how the hold of industrialism on the outlook of the people has weakened steadily. The two nations, which have been its worst apostles, namely England and Germany, have realised by bitter experience that to depend upon an eternal excess of exports over imports, the former being manufactures and the latter being raw materials and food

products, is an impossibility. If every nation that is industrially inclined, should prosper by its gospel of industrialism it must be eternally exporting industrial goods to other nations. But as the same zeal, not for being merely self-contained but for becoming an exporter as well, is apt to over-power the feelings of other nations, it becomes a process of unceasing competition in which every nation would like to sell as much as possible and buy as little as possible. And when all the nations are similarly inclined they will cease to find markets except by a process of exploitation of the weaker nationalities elsewhere.

### **Exploitation of East.**

The East has provided a suitable ground for exploitation up-to-now. But when Japan has risen to the position of a successful competitor with the foremost industrial nations of the West, when China has thrown off the torpor of ages and India has become awakened to a new national self-consciousness, when Afghanistan and Persia have toed the line with the forward nations of the day and Palestine and Syria are fast surviving the recent onslaughts of the West and finally when Turkey has ceased to be the sick man of Europe, and Egypt the play-thing of foreign nations, the chances for England and Germany, may be considered to have been reduced to their minimum in their field of exploitation. France is happily situated in occupying as it does a position in which she is able to balance her

industrial and agricultural than industrial, is fast making herself self-contained in those domains of her activity where she has been found wanting.

As against all these, Russia has fought a single-handed and successful battle, producing all her wants by an intensified plan of action, not merely making her machinery and mills, and blasts and furnaces, but rearing her rabbits to the tune of ten millions in the first quinquennium so as to obviate the import of meat. She has further barred, banged and bolted the door of foreign trade, reducing everything in that line to the minimum and that conducted through the State mostly for barter, and only when inevitable, for money.

Thus, have the nations of the West been obliged to make themselves self-contained and as an illustration we read that Germany has to ration her commodities in the winter this year as her exports cannot pay for her imports. If, therefore, the nations of the West have lost their markets in the East and cannot sell their manufactures to one another, they must all become self-contained and self-sufficient and when that consummation happens, manufacture for export will cease, production for consumption remains, and people will not consent to make a single person the producer and themselves running into millions the consumers, building up for him profits, wealth and skyscrapers and content with hovels and slums for themselves. When the large scale manufacturer ceases to exist, the labour out-look of the workers becomes gloomy, and the only

remedy to unemployment will be a sharing of the profits of production by corporate, co-operative activities, or by a reversion to the ancient cottage industries. We are perhaps looking a little too far, but when we are visualising the destinies of nations and planning for a whole future, it were better to look a little too far, than to be myopic.

### **India's Socio-Economic Structure.**

That which Europe has found inevitable after a century and a half of undreamt of prosperity and unexpected suffering, that ideal of self-containedness and self-sufficiency, and a reversion to cottage industries and home-crafts, that, fortunately, is the very basis of India's age-long social structure, which has survived the buffets of time and circumstances as well as the onslaughts of successive invasions. In the past we too had out cities which were the marts of "barbaric pearl and gold" for the caravans of the world. They brought wealth into the country but did not drain away the wealth of the land as the cities of modern India do now. But India is essentially a land of villages, for what are a dozen cities or a couple of thousands of towns, compared to her seven lakhs of villages. And these are not scattered homesteads, but homogenous aggregates of well assorted population, representing all the crafts if necessary for the civilised life of the people. You have amongst the village population the carpenter and the smith, the mason and the jeweller, the builder of the

home and its beautifier, the spinner and the weaver, the printer and the dyer, the dhoby and the barber, the cobbler and the farmer, the priest and the physician, the poet and the draftsman all of whom constitute, the complete equipment of a self-contained unit of the nationality. What if communications were cut off or floods surrounded a village, or the enemy besieged it !

It is singularly fortunate for us that we have with us a socio-economic system intact, which the nations of the West have had to rediscover for themselves and which they are seeking with difficulty to rehabilitate. It is a system which ensures work to all; and work to all means food and raiment to every one. When food and raiment are guaranteed there is leisure once again, leisure brings in its train, knowledge and culture and opens out the avenues to the higher life of man, the longings of the human spirit. Not only is work ensured to all, but occupations have been made almost hereditary, so as to conserve the skill of the hand, and the subtleties of the intellect which have raised the Indian crafts to the position of eminence that is theirs even to-day and made philosophers of the weaver and the potter. Craft guilds have been in existence from time immemorial, regulating not merely the volume of work turned out, but the quality thereof so that it is considered not merely a crime but a sin to manufacture cheap and nasty articles, and the tawdry wares of the West. The craftsmanship is moved not merely by an artistic idealism, but by an idealism which is linked to

a spirit of religious fervour and devotion. That is how the inhibitions of religious belief operate as healthy restraints upon the immoralities of a competitive tendency. In a word, the village organisation is a co-operative commonwealth, where people live — each for all and all for each.

### **Need for caution.**

In considering, therefore, the applicability of a scheme of socialism, to the present day conditions of India, let us not be carried away by the havoc that may have been committed, by a few industrial magnates here, or the rack-renting that may have been practised by a larger number of Zamindars there. These conditions have doubtless to be faced, but to be obsessed by them in judging the needs of the country is to lose our balance. It is our good fortune to inherit a social and economic system, in which the balance between money and culture, has been evenly maintained. Under it, knowledge is not a means to earning, but only a title to service and it has been enjoined that the man of property should maintain the man of knowledge. Learning is wedded to poverty and wealth has been assigned a second place of society. Socialism is only a revolt against the supremacy of wealth and that revolt has no place in a scheme of society in which such a supremacy has been eliminated.

In fact, Indian Society is the result of the working out of the revolt itself and, having successfully

stood the test of ages, deserves a fair trial once again. Not money but service is made the bond of society and constitutes the new measure of values. It is the proof of affection and the pillar of corporate life. Where service is the key note of human relationships, love will be found to be the fountain-spring that really sustains the spirit of service and when love and service constitute the basis of society, force and money take a back place. These very factors, namely, force, and its concrete manifestation, money, are foundations of society in the West and have been a fruitful source of the warfare, between the classes and the masses, of the spirit of competition that is abroad, of the love of material wealth, the craving for Empires, the quest for markets, and the spirit of militarism. Eliminate them or reduce their influence to a minimum and you build up a form of society altogether different from that of the rest. In a word, we rediscover our ancient society. It has doubtless gathered dust around it. The new European ideal of knowledge as a means to the acquisition of wealth has corrupted the ideal of Learning in the East. Love of power and authority, which are really opportunities for service, has corroded human nature during the past century. We have to survive these accretions, these corruptions and corrosions and burnish and purify the metal within. Caste has become a synonym of antagonism instead of a conserving force of the traditional talents of the people. Latterly, the grafting of politics under the aegis of Britain on to caste and community, has degenerated these more than anything else. It is

## GANDHISM OR SOCIALISM

our immediate task to revivify our ideals of Varna and Ashrama, and restore into them the Dharma that is theirs.

### Gandhism.

One is not always sure when a great man is born into an age, whether it is the man that makes the age or it is the age that makes the man. Perhaps the truth lies between the two or in both. With Gandhi and Indian society at any rate, we may take it that the two have acted and reacted upon each other. The conditions of society have refashioned the soul and spirit of Gandhi and Gandhi has impressed Indian Society with the stamp of his own personality. He has evolved a new *Dharma* which is a blend of the separate Dharmas of the four Varnas, and the four Ashramas of Hindu society combining in himself the farmer and the weaver, the merchant and the businessman, the warrior that fights and protects, and ultimately the servant of the people, rising by his service and love to the position of the Smrithikarta and Suthrakara. He has also combined in him the Brahmachari and the Grihastha, the Vanaprastha and the Sanyasi. Ideals of life which were considered exclusive have been harmonized and co-ordinated and made comprehensive and composite.

Gandhi realises that the four Varnas do not exist to-day and therefore it is the duty of those who believe in the Varnas to restore them by observing the sovereign principles of purity and self-restraint. He has sought

thus to purge Hindu society of the dross that has gathered over the nugget and reconstruct it on foundations once again of love and service. The cult of the prayer "*Sarve Janah Sukhino Bhavanthu*" is once again broadcast to a people who repeat the mantram thrice a day but do not understand its import. In that view Gandhi has equated Swaraj—not to the exercise of power and force but to the supply of food and raiment to all through the propagation of the gospel of Love and Service. But food and raiment do not fall from the Heavens like manna in the wilderness. They have to be laboured and striven for. Unto this end Gandhi has preached the gospel of manual work—typified in spinning and prescribed it as a daily sacrament into every man, woman and child alike. In the vast human power of this ancient land whose population is next only to that of China, he has discovered a potentiality of riches which is unrivalled by the rest of the world—a potentiality verily which does not depend upon balance of trade, markets, imperialism or militarism, exchange or currency deflation or inflation, scientific inventions and discoveries. Cross-cuts of machinery do not imperil these potential riches, for they depend upon the simple ideal of plain living and high thinking, hardworking and honest earning.

Gandhi's cult is no cult of negation, much less of submission to a superior power of superior competition. When ideas are trained and affections are fixed, the poorest gifts of the mother become

invaluable and hold their own against the competition of the richest imports into the country. Gandhi, on the contrary has taught the secret of cheap manufacture by eliminating the cost of labour which is to be free because it is the labour of leisure and love and not the labour of contract or indenture. Thus will it be seen that he stands almost for self-sufficiency in respect of food and clothing—the primary needs of man, and where man is self-sufficient, the villages are, the towns will be and the cities tend to be self-sufficient as well. And all this is to be achieved not by the shedding of blood, not by a play of force, but by the simple recognition of duty in place of the eternal assertion of right, by voluntary work in place of enforced labour, by the operation of love instead of the exercise of force, by contentment instead of ambition, by lowering the scale of life instead of raising its standard, by self-restraint instead of self-indulgence, by truthfulness instead of diplomacy or dissimulation.

### **Gandhism V. Socialism**

If the object of socialism is to grant equal opportunities to all, Gandhism has for its object the utilization of the time and opportunities that every one has for a noble end. If socialism disestablishes property by capital levy, heavy surcharges, expropriation, and force, Gandhism appeals to the age-long tradition of the nation which has exalted poverty above riches and learning above wealth. If socialism invokes the intervention of the state for achieving its ends, Gandhism

depends for its success upon the refinement of conscience and the development of culture of each citizen of the state. The results of socialism imposed from without are, spectacular as they look, really uncertain and even hazardous while of Gandhism small as they look take a firm and deep root in the affections of the people. Socialism has witnessed the sorry sight of its apostles becoming dictators in order to perpetuate their principles and power. Gandhism depends upon a voluntary acceptance of self-denial and has witnessed the rise, men like Gopaldas Desai—the Thakur of Rai Sangli and Durbar of Dhassa and a young man like the Raja of Kalakankar in U. P. Socialism with the majority of people is a tendency, but Gandhism is a stern actuality. Socialism tells others what they should do—Gandhism prescribes to each what he should do. Socialism seeks to promote humanity through hatred and dissension in order to promote the service of humanity. Socialism accumulates the food products of country where some areas are barren and redistributes them—Gandhism urges each man to produce his own food and clothing in a country which abounds in every variety of soil and surface and every type of climate and conditions. Socialism maintains cards of labour and forces every one to work for the state—Gandhism shows the beneficence to the world of each man and woman working with the traditions of each group of individuals. Socialism seeks to equalise the distribution of property in a society abounding in inequalities even in the family circle—inheritance in the Hindus which

ensures equal shares to sons and in the Muslims with equitable shares to daughters as well. Socialism may be the remedy to the distempers of the body politic in the West, but Gandhism is the interpretation of the structure and functions of society which the Rishis had fashioned thousands of years ago and which another Rishi is trying to rehabilitate to-day. That is why Gandhi himself said at Karachi "Gandhi may die, but Gandhism will live for ever "

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## CHAPTER VI

### A SYNTHESIS OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

#### A Happy Reconciliation between the Old and the New

We are wont to classify the various civilizations of the world as ancient and modern. But they are not of two organically different types. Not that there are not differences between the two groups in structure and function, but that there is nothing "modern" which has not in it certain elements of the "ancient" and nothing "ancient" either which has not reacted to the impact of the "modern". Who can divide up the waters in the bed of river into those which are of the freshes of the year and those which were of the year previous and have escaped their absorption into the ocean? And what if they were so absorbed for the clouds in the heavens do not bring us our rains from Mars or Jupiter? They only reach us back the vapours of an earlier season which they had taken from river and sea.

So are the modern elements of civilizations. They have not sprung anew from a void of thought or a vacuum of sentiment. They are but the permutations and combinations of accepted values, social economical and ethical, which gain or lose in emphasis with the

changing epochs of eternity. Ideas and ideals which are hoary with age and sanctified by time are spurned as fantastic when conditions change. The principles on which the social structure was erected thousands of years ago, have necessarily to undergo mutation as contacts are established between communities and nations which at the time of their origin knew not one another.

### **New names for old.**

We witness thus the re-incarnation of Ceasar in Mussolini in Italy, the revivification of Erin after seven centuries of subjection, the reunion of the fragmented components of Italy, and the planting to-day of the ideals of "Kritha Yuga" of the "Itihasas" in the semi-Oriental and semi-Occidental nations of Russia. Only we give new names and adopt new terminology. Emperors are known as Dictators Confederacies are evolved into Federations and "Kritha Yuga" becomes the Soviet. The cyclical renewals of nomenclature and phraseology do not merely involve a bare repetition of the effete formulae or exploded theories but cover a certain adaptation of the old laws and institutions to the new times, and the process passes under the soft and unexciting name of evolution. Not often, however does the history of every age and every clime exhibit the play of forces which are less unoffending and more obtrusive and which by common consent, bring about Revolutions.

Great Revolutions in the past as well as the present have been the result of violence and it has been left to Hindusthan and to the Indian National Congress to work out a new scheme of national upheaval, not by the time-honoured and traditional methods of physical force exercised in a brutal fashion, but by the gentle application of methods which are not less forceful nor less effective methods wedded to Truth and Non-violence.

### **True Mission of Congress.**

The Congress has thus worked its way to the position of not merely a party, addressing itself to elections and capture of power, but to that of a world instrument of reform aiming at the complete destruction of the auto-infectious virus of brute force, vengeance and warfare, and the installation on the throne of power of the arbitrament of peace and goodwill. The Congress may be a body whose strength of numbers is limited, whose success is doubtful, but numbers do not count in moral warfare, while achievement and successes are but relative terms which do not imply merely a single, final phase of a struggle, but cover really the processes and the progressive stages that preceded this ultimate result. When we know that in Russia the strength of the Soviet party was barely half a million in 1930, out of a population of over 80 millions, we can readily understand that movements of national resurgence should be assessed not by volume but weight.

The Congress is the little fire under the huge cauldron in which the old concepts of subjection and slavery are being boiled down to the essence of self-reliance and self-realisation. The Congress is the particle of musk within the folds of a bulky wardrobe which permeates the clothing with its own life-giving aroma. The congress is the dynamo which liberates the spark that explodes the mixture of air and petrol and starts the machine of Indian nationalism.

In a word, the Congress is the seed of the "banyan" which in time germinates and is destined to grow into the mighty tree giving shelter alike to bird and beast. The Congress is not a "political" body addressing itself to administrative grievances, not a social reform organization seeking to bring about innovations in the customs and manners of society, not an Economic Reconstruction League aiming at huge scale manufacture for consumption not a "Mazhabi Hidayat Tika Jamiat" working to restore the faith of mankind in one God and the worship of that God in Truth and in spirit.

The Congress is all these and more. It is a composite and comprehensive organization of national forces which by their conjoint action are intended to rediscover and reintegrate Indian culture. To this end India has to relieve herself of foreign domination, overhaul the social structure, realign the economic march and build up a new religion the religion of patriotism worshipping with service and sacrifice the one God of

humanity, on the high pedestal of Truth and Non-violence.

### **Blend of new and old.**

It is only when the purpose of the Congress is understood on this widely receptive basis, that we can also understand the equally wide range covered by the different items of the Congress programme. While the primary duty of the Congress is to shake off the lurking sense of slavery and the blight it works on our sense of citizenship, it is at the same time the supreme concern of the Congress to chalk out those paths of constructive reform by a due synthesis of which Indian Nationalism can claim its due place in the comity of modern nations.

India is truly at the Charing-Cross of life, and is puzzled to know which way to proceed, the ancient civilizations: Chaldean, Babylonian and Assirian have wellnigh lost their individuality. India and China would have gone the way of their compeers had it not been for the greater elasticity and the higher vitality that is inherent in them. They are witnessing the play of conflicting forces on themselves. They are tossed about between the ideals of their ineradicable heredity and the ideas dominating their alluring but illusory environment. The golden past of their ancestors is irrecoverable, the iron present of their Western rivals is inimitable. The contrast between the ancient and the modern is glaring as well as puzzling. The old spirit of co-operation is dead, the new spirit of competi-

tion is destructive. The old cunning of the hand has perished the new cunning of the machine is tried and found wanting. The lawgivers of old wedded poverty to learning, the empire builders of to-day have made knowledge the key to wealth. Ancient ideals condemned money, modern ones install it as the be-all and end-all of life. "Duty" was the watch-word of a former age, "right" is shibboleth of the present day. The spinning wheel was the index of the bygone civilizations, the steering wheel is the "sinex qua non", of the new times.

India is tossed about between these two conflicting and even contradictory aspects of life, and the Congress has taken upon itself the task of reconciling the one with the other, and co-ordinating the longings of a heaven aspiring soul with the ambitions of a world-conquering will. Almost every age, every epoch every century and every generation has had to effect these reconciliations and the Congress is engaged in a task which, however difficult it may be on account of the peculiar concatenation of the conditions of to-day is, in kind if not in degree, essentially the task which our "Sasthrakars" and our "Paigambaras" our "Rishis" and our "Avalyas" had to face in their own day, and which they successfully effected by the "Riks" and the "Rikans" by the "Vanis" and "Vahis" by the "Upanishads" and the "Hadisa" and by the "Shasthras" and "Shariat."

### **Western Influence.**

India's problem is not merely the problem of freeing herself from foreign yoke. India has spent a century and a half under the influence of Western civilizations and has imbibed many of their ways and manners. She has discarded her own culture and been initiated into the culture of her rulers. Indian society is being remodelled after Western Society. Concepts of marriage and divorce, liberty of women, pursuit of English education, love of University degrees craving for service under state, ideas of justice, rules of evidence, transfer of property-conditions of contracts the training of the emotions, the domination of intellect the superior attention to the physical body and its enjoyments in life, a fancy for cheap and glossy apparel, the supersession of man by machine in the domain of art and industry a general spirit of agnostic materialism, the weakening of the altruistic proclivities and a certain enlightened selfishness—these are some of the conspicuous features of national character brought into prominence by the impact of the Western civilizations.

### **Gandhiji's Synthetic Gospel**

The Congress has witnessed the growth of these thoughts and sentiments under its very nose and it was only in 1906, that it arrested the nation's attention by raising the cry of "Swadesi". Gandhi came on the scene in 1920 and has since worked out a new synthesis.

Every synthesis is the resultant of a "thesis" and an "antithesis". In enunciating his Gospel, Gandhi had naturally to condemn some of the new ways which were destructive of the resources of the country and this condemnation soon earned for his teachings the appellation of a negative doctrine. Ideas like matter are impenetrable. Old ideas must be exploded in order to yield place to new ones. The latter are, of course, new and their value cannot be assessed and when that is so people would be loathe to give up for their sake their older variants which had been serving their own purpose for a time. That is why all new teachings are taunted as savouring of negation. They do, but they carry with them support of positive form and factor.

The boycott of foreign cloth does not signify the advocacy of nudity, but implies and includes the manufacture of Swadeshi cloth—preferably hand-spun and hand-woven. The boycott of Courts does not signify anarchy but implies and includes the promotion of swift and effective justice on the spot by the elders of society. The boycott of Councils does not signify the annihilation of laws but the enactment of measures by the true representatives of the people. The boycott of colleges does not signify the endorsement of a state of ignorance and superstition but implies and includes the promotion of national education on national lines, under national control and directed towards the realisation of national destiny. The task then before the Congress is a huge one—it is complex in character and

is beset with difficulties arising from a keen sense of vested interests. Yet has the Congress taken up a programme of a varied character through which there runs a central harmony. Let us study wherein lies this harmony in the seemingly unconnected items of the Congress programme.

### **Dual Programme.**

During the past fifteen years, the Congress, as is well-known, has pursued a dual programme even as the Government have done. The latter have described theirs as repression and reform. On the one hand they repress the popular aspirations and on the other introduce measures which according to them are designed to meet those aspirations half way. Ours is a programme which is allied to Government's. We express our ambitions and aspirations and work them out in two ways. When we meet, with resistance from Government, we fight them and whether we fight them or not, we are always engaged in a constructive programme of our own. The construction or reconstruction of national activities is not a light task. It requires inexhaustible resources which a popular body working against the Government of the day cannot easily command. It requires the willing co-operation of the people. When the philosophy of self-reliance is explained; the preachers and the teachers are brought under the blighting operation of obsolete laws or new ones forged for the non-co-operator.

Under the embarrassing conditions, the Congress can only barely touch the outer fringe of national reconstruction in each one of its several aspects or departments. In the domain of "economic" reform, we have revived the craft of Khaddar and installed it on a firm basis. It took a whole movement to bring about this seemingly small result. The sufferings of 1920-25 have born to us this abiding fruit which though it has not wholly introduced hand-spun hand-woven cloth throughout India, has succeeded in driving out nine-tenths of foreign cloth from the shores of this ancient country.

Granted that India would recover her economic self-sufficiency, she cannot, albeit, sustain her nascent nationalism merely by a common antipathy to a foreigner. She must be animated by a sense of equality. The age-long evil of "untouchability" of a fifth of the populace—which constitutes a taint on nationalism and a sin against humanity—has attracted universal attention. It is doubtless true that for a decade the Social conference with a programme of social reform was an adjunct of the Congress and the differences that arose in 1895 on the question whether the Congress could directly associate itself with the scheme of social reform till then tacked on to the political gathering were settled peacefully at the Poona Session ( 1895 ) by M. G. Ranade by his "tolerant and wise action". But social reform had remained ever since a step-child of the national gathering until in 1920 the dynamic programme

of Gandhi widened the outlook of the Congress and abolished the compartmentalism that hitherto prevailed between political reform and social reconstruction. What the Congress has achieved in the direction of the removal of the greatest social evil in Hinduism—namely untouchability, is now well-known. Gandhi was at death's door in order to awaken the national conscience and awaken he did.

### **Three beams.**

The three beams on which Indian Nationalism is to be constructed are not really, as Lord Iwrin would put Federation, Central Responsibility and Safeguards in Indian interests, but “Khadder, removal of untouchability and the abolition of drink”. The great movement of 1921–25 we saw, put Khadder on a firm basis in the domain of “economics” that of 1930–34 put untouchability out of court in the sphere of “social” reconstruction. There remains the third, abolition of drink to be effected in the domain of “morals”. May be, this would require another national upheaval perhaps another fast unto death by Gandhi. But whether it requires heavy sacrifices or mild, it constitutes the third side of the triangle on which the National Edifice is to be raised.

The Congress has not been a preserve of one class of people or one community of the population or one category of interest. It had addressed itself to the removal of grievances affecting all classes and categories and communities—notably the poor ryots of the

country. These monopolised the attention of the Congress in the earlier days and from the year 1917 a new chapter opened in the history of the Nation, when the Champaran question was taken up by Gandhi in Bihar though not directly under the Congress. If Gandhi risked his liberty to save the Bihar tenants in 1917, he ran an equal risk the next year in order to save the Ahmedabad mill workers.

And when the first lessons of Satyagraha were gone through at Champaran, in Ahmedabad and in Kaira, a new strategy—the strategy of truth and non-violence—came into the arena which was accepted by the Congress and it was with the aid of this new weapon that the Congress addressed itself to a programme of comprehensive reform in the economic, social and ethical spheres which combined to make the political sphere. Politics is after all the science and art of human well-being and as such does not admit of any vivi-section into different fragments or compartments. This is the great achievement of the third decade of the twentieth century an achievement which has turned the nation's attention to the East from the West, to themselves from others, to reconstruction from within instead of agitation from without.

### **True meaning of Swaraj.**

When once the nation began to recognise that national emancipation meant self-realization, it took measures in earnest in Bombay last year to extend the

application on a nation-wide scale of the principles which lead to the revival of Khaddar. Khaddar is really the prince of village industries and if there is real logic or life in the revival of well nigh dead industry like Khaddar, then there is equal logic and life in reviving the other dead or dying industries of the villages in India. The story of the revival of these vanished crafts and arts is, indeed a twice-told tale. But it has to be told once again in reviewing the multiple aspects of the Congress work in its latter day development.

The problem of Indian Swaraj is the problem of food and raiment to all and has to be solved in the face of the onslaughts of a civilization which has installed capitalism on the seats of power and has led to grovelling poverty side by side with immeasurable riches. These contrasts in the Western countries are being steadily repeated in India and the trained intellects of our universities which have been fed on the pabulum of Western economics have raised a loud cry of socialism — and no damned non-sense. But it does not require much of imagination to see that a remedy to be serviceable must follow the disease and what is a cure in England may be a mere “placebo” in India.

The ailments of the body politic do not yield to challatanism. They require a correct analysis and a suitable remedy. The Indian Nation is constructed upon those very principles of self sufficiency for which

the European nations are helplessly crying. And once the principle of self-sufficiency is established, it works itself out into sufficiency on horizontal planes not in vertical heights. Each area preserves that self-sufficiency which the Nation aims at and it is this principle that is noticeable in the ancient village organisation of India.

### **No base counterfeit**

It is thus that the village has become the granary of the nation, the store house of the country's wealth, the fountain spring of national skill and sense of beauty, the repository of the art-life of the people, the generator of the motive power of a whole race. To restore such village to its pristine eminence does not require any apologies from its votaries and does not merit any criticisms from its opponents. This stupendous task has been taken on hand to give the finishing touch, as it were, to the up-building of Indian Nationalism. The Indian Nation so revived shall be not a base imitation but a pure reconstruction, not a base counterfeit but pure sterling, not a base patch-work but a pure art treasure.

### **Congress of working men.**

It is seldom that a man discovers the forest in the midst of the tress. The man that looks to details is hardly able to catch a bird's-eye-view of history or life as a whole. It requires not only the capacity to

judge but also a certain distance of time and even of space in order to be able to make correct estimates of the past achievements or failures. While the politician works out his programme from day to day according to his lights, it is the historian that reads the central theme round which gather the events reviewed by him. That is why the history of to-day was the politics of yesterday, while the politics of to-day becomes the history of tomorrow. If this view is correct, we need not wonder that there should be so many wrong criticisms regarding the work of the Congress during the past half a century.

*Pioneers honoured.*

It is fashionable to regard that the Congress was worked by, and aimed at promoting the interests of the English educated aristocracy of India and ignored the interests and rights of the vast mass of the working population. It is, doubtless, true that the Congress machinery was handled till about a decade ago by the products of the universities and English education. But to say that they were working the set purpose of securing their self-aggrandizement is not only to indulge in a travesty of an obvious truth but also to exhibit gross ingratitude of our forbears. We must own, however, that the strategy in combating the Congress has been all along to negotiate the good-will of those engaged in political agitation and throw temptation in their way so that one after another they became the unwitting prey of diplomacy. They filled high

posts in Administration and soon shifted their attention to the thought of securing power under it when acceptance of high offices did not secure them the influence they sought. But they were no more selling their country for self-interest than the Congressmen to-day who are loudly asking for office acceptance and the capture of power. It may be that both the cases the counter-strategy of the Congress in meeting superior strategy was and is grossly mistaken but we should not confuse between the effect and the cause, between the result and the motive.

### *They Worked for Workers*

Although the Congressmen of the earlier days had not any clear conception of village leadership, yet they placed foremost in their programme the safeguarding of village interests. And when they asked for safeguarding of village interests, they were only asking for the safeguarding of the interests of the workingmen. For there are no drones in village society and the bulk of the village population could not get their wealth out of the bosom of the earth except by the sweat of their brow. When, till the year 1915, Congress grievance after grievance, all those grievances, one may venture to say, related to the life and occupations of the workingmen in the villages.

In pleading for permanent settlement it was the evergrowing burden of taxation that was being augmented every thirty years which was sought to be lightened. In demanding the repeal of the Arms Act,

it was the right of the village people to guard their houses, their cattle and their crops against the ravages of the wild beasts that was being pressed for. In urging the abolition of salt duty, it was the health of the village workingmen and of their cattle as well as the wealth of the petty village industries on the sea coast that was attempted to be conserved. In protesting against the Forest Laws, it was the ancient rights of the workingmen to gather fuel for their hearths, timber for their homes and fodder for their animals that was attempted to be retained. In formulating a scheme of compulsory and free primary education it was the ignorance and superstition of the workingmen in the country, that were hoped to be dispelled. In striving to resuscitate village industries, it was the food and raiment of the village workers that was intended to be replenished.

Thus will it be seen that for thirty years the Congress had placed in the forefront of its programme the interests of the vast working population of the country. Only a clever and discerning Administration shifted the attention and interests of the Congressmen of the day to matters immediately tangible and better appealing to their enlightened self-interest.

*Critics Answered — the past.*

It is nevertheless open to the critic to say that nothing was done for the cause of labour in the urban areas. The fact may be true but the allegation behind it is untrue. How can that be so? Our ideas of labour

notably of urban labour and the amelioration of its conditions in towns and cities are largely modelled after, if not wholly copied from, allied ideas in the west. But the critic often forgets that ideas take time to travel even as matter does, from place to place and oftentimes take longer to travel than those that originate them. The voyage from England to India may have taken three months at one time and three weeks later and may take only three days now by air. And news and men may fly from the West to the East in three hours, but it has taken decades for the ideas of one nation to travel to the other nations and impress themselves upon their attention. It was not till the end of the seventies that labour had its first representation in the British Parliament and it was only after the Boer-War that it managed to obtain a representation of forty members in the House of Commons. Labour problems have attracted the attention of the English nation only ten to fifteen years ago and when that is the position in country where three-fourths of the population live in towns and thrive on industrial labour, how can we complain that labour did not obtain its due measure of regard in India where four-fifths of the population live by agricultural or village labour.

If it is open to the Socialist of to-day to nurse a grievance that his Congress forbears neglected the cause of urban and industrial labour, it would be equally open to the latter to complain that the former were not born thirty or forty years earlier in life, or that the

ideas and ideals of the West had not travelled a whole generation quicker to the East. Verily, these are all fantastic grievances. The Congress never lost time in making its programme comprehensive. Only it is wrong to judge the happening of an earlier era by the experience of a later day.

... ..*And Now.*

It would nevertheless be open to the critic to ask whether in recent times the Congress has extended its helping hand to the starving ryot and the oppressed labourer. Every Congressman may well lay his hand on his heart and answer the question in the affirmative. A new era has opened for the peasant and the labourer in India with the arrival of Gandhi in 1915 and the application of his new technique of warfare to the conditions of Indian subjection.

In Champaran, he espoused the cause of tenants under the planters and achieved a measure of success which is too-well known to need any elaborate description. The town labourer was not neglected, for in the great Ahmedabad mill strike which happened soon after the Champaran victory, Gandhi once again applied his new cult of non-violent resistance to the task of securing redress of the grievances of the labour and eminently succeeded in his objective. A similar success attended his espousal of the cause of Khaira ryots at about the same time in securing a postponement of the collection of the land revenue on account of the failure of the season.

This is all ancient history, the critic is apt to observe, and in one sense it is all the work of Gandhi of the pre-congress era. Both are true. But the past lives in the present and paves the way for the future. The past, the present and the future are but the halting stations of the never ending journey of life and cannot be dissociated one from the other. Gandhi — the satyagrahi was only the precursor of Gandhi the Congressman and Gandhi the Congressman had only made the Congress an enlarged edition of himself.

### *Hard Reality*

Let us not indulge in these philosophical generalisations but come to grips with facts. The Congress, it is true, has not organised strikes but it has always employed its good offices, whenever a strike is afoot. After all, strikes cover only the industrial labour of the country and the industrial labour of the country covers but a million and half of men and women all told. What is a million and half compared to a hundred and fifty million of labourers toiling and moiling the whole day and all day long, in field and forest, under sun and rain, half-starved, ill-clad with no alternative occupation and appellate authority. The lot of the village labourer is one that demands public attention and a hundred fold more than that of the town labourer. It is fashionable to speak of peasants and workers but we only speak of them. When we draw programmes, we

quietly cut out the peasants and take up the workers by which term we mean the urban labourer. The latter attracts our attention because towns are more obstrusive than villages and "millhand" is more aggressive than the "villager". Be this as it may, the fact remains that the Congress has not merely minded the interests of the village workman but established his leadership in the counsels of the Congress. It is one khaddar clad man in the village that leads village politics and carries the day in the elections of the village, the district and the province. The economic interests of the village workers are given their due share of attention. The stream of wealth which has flown for over a century from village to the town, from the town to city and then abroad, across the high seas, has had its course turned in the opposite direction, so that to-day money flows from Bombay to Masulipatam and thence to the villages round about. Khaddar has brought about this miracle. It has put lakhs of rupees into the hands of the village woman, the village weaver, the village dhobi and the dyer. Are they not all workmen? And in the wake of khaddar have come village industries through which we hope to revive the callings of the village smith and carpenter, the village weaver and the spinner, the village printer and dyer, the village cobbler and potter, and the village physician and the priest one and all of them are village workmen. The Congress has gone one step further. It has put a premium on manual labourer, and demanded a symbolic recognition of its undeniable claims. The definition of

labour in the West is very elastic. The intellectual labour of doctors and lawyers is not excluded from its domain. We have tightened the hold of labour on the nation made its claims on national attention right and thus elevated in fact, not merely in theory, its position in society. The Congress has passed from the aristocrat to the "Upper Middle-classes and from there to the 'lower middle' and the lowest ranks of society—if we may borrow phraseology standards of wealth. The Congress has to go "lower down" still and may have even to fight with those very people, if needs be, who had been its earliest supporters. That the Congress accepts the help offered by the rich man does not mean that it has sold itself to mammon. You cannot eliminate the well-to-do from the citizenship of India, any more than you can the so-called 'untouchables' or the 'fallen sisters'. The prostitute, the Harijan and the aristocrat have equal right to make their contribution to the up-building of the Nation. They have equal right to claim a place in the counsels of the nation. The only question, is,—in those interests shall the ordering of the national affairs be conducted? Is it the vast numbers of masses that run up to millions that must control the affairs of the nation or is it a handful of well-to-do men that seek to feather their own nest? The verdict of the Congress is clear. The Congress is essentially an organisation of the workmen in the country, safeguarding the interests of the labourer, and the peasant and the Congress shall stand or fall by the measure in which it shall adhere

to this standard or deviate from it. The Congress has two children—the elder, the village labourer and the younger, the urban workman. Its assets are the equal heritage of both as in Hindu and Muslim society and no one shall suffer in the future Indian Nation.

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## CHAPTER VII

### NATIONALISM AND THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

#### Village Industries Association.

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##### **Its aims and objects.**

One of the misfortunes of our civilization is that we are at times called upon to define axioms. They are really truths which are taken for granted, which are only to be sensed, not discussed much less defined. And when we discuss or define, we must discourse upon elementary points; and this is the excuse for the common places set forth in this communication.

It follows from the concept of Indian Nationalism that in the wake of political independence, or even in advance of it, there should be an economic independence — i.e., complete sufficiency in each country. Not that the emenities of give-and-take which prevail among men are wrong amongst the nations of the world, be that, based, as they are, upon huge and complete problems like the relativity of prices, which themselves are dependent not only upon the natural conditions of soil and climate, but upon the artificial conditions of mass production and of currency and exchange, they introduce adventitious forces into the normal life

of the country and destroy the even tenor of the natural life of the people thereof.

### **Evils of "Modern" Culture.**

Every civilized man wears cloth—cotton, linen, silk or wool. If one country however, offers to clothe the people of another, the latter would thereby not only lose their skill in handicrafts, but becomes the bond-slaves of the country that supplies. The index of civilization is really the arts and crafts of the people who largely live in its villages. If you gain Swaraj and lose the cunning of your fingers, you gain the world, but lose your soul.

'Soul' 'art', 'beauty' are perchance abstract terms. They mean no concrete ideas to the men in the street. Really they are much better understood by the unlettered men than by those who are sophisticated by the culture of the modern day. The west with its onslaughts of machinery and competition upon the pristine ideals of Eastern simplicity, beauty, purity and spirituality has made 'Education' and 'Culture' terms synonymous with struggle and survival of the fittest with money and power, with force and competition, and such other things. The country has cast off its ancient idols and begun to worship strange gods, we have been taught to use in our daily life foreign articles, and imbibe every moment foreign ideals.

### **Educated Indian's Home.**

Nationalism under the conditions has become a mockery. Before we say so, let us prove our case. Go to an educated Indian's home and take room after room of his house, child after child of his family, his furniture, conveyances and the very materials of his buildings and say whether the tastes exhibited therein, the articles employed and the ideals pursued are such as are calculated to conserve and promote India's economic, aesthetic, or ethical well-being.

From morning to evening we use foreign articles. The two hair brushes with which we dress our hair, our tooth brushes and shaving brushes, our nail brushes and boot brushes and bathing brushes are all foreign. Our soaps and snows, our cosmetics, and vaselines, our face powders and toilets are likewise foreign. Our toys and dolls are English, German or Japanese. Our socks and garters, our ties and clips, our buttons and links, our belts and braces, sometimes our collars and cuffs and our boots and hats are imported. That is not all; our cups and saucers, our spoons and forks, our crockery and cutlery—all hail from abroad. These with French coffee, Australian milk, Reading biscuits, Java sugar, Cheshire salt, and English jams make our Chota Hazri prepared on Primus stoves wholly foreign except for the water inevitably used. Not a few use Vichy and Karisbad for quenching common thirst while to quench the uncommon thirst we use imported wines and whiskies, cock-tails, and champagne, beers and brandies. In the

homes we use Dietz's lamps and Petromax lights, Enamel ware and Brasso metal polish. On the play grounds we use Hockey sticks, Tennis racquets and Cricket and Badminton bats. In clubs we use Billiard and Bagaterransle cues, Ping-pong balls and U. S. A. cards. In our office rooms we use stationery including letter paper and enevelopes, pens and pencils, blotters and inkstands, paper rolls, pins and clips, nibs and pipettes of foreign origin. Our spectacles, tapes and weighing machines come from abroad. Our children's perambulators and push pushes are likewise foreign. Our Venesta chairs are made of Austrian Bentwood or Czechoslovakian compressed plank, our mirror frames and punka pulleys are from outside our country.

### **Nation or Foreign Countries' Market ?**

In house-building we use Italian marbles and Tiles and imported porcelain chips for flooring. Portland Cement and Canadian wainscotting, Hull's distempers and German paints for walls, Ruberoid sheets and asbestos tiles for roofing, let alone the wirenailed, screws, hinges, bars, bolts, and handles and locks,—all imported. And what about furniture? Door curtains and window screens, Queen Anne's chairs and bed room sofas and Rosewood shelves wall mirrors and corner brackets. Tea Poys walking sticks and umbrellas, hat rackets, pictures and paintings, tables, chairs, pigeon holes, fountain pens and inks, Harmoniums, gramophones and records, violins, orchestras,

pianoes, home cinemas and radios, clocks and wall decorations—all come from abroad. Need we mention, in particular cloth and eatables, medicines and Baby-foods, Crevionette, marion, Blazers and Broadcloth, Tonics and Injections, drugs and patents, condensed milks and malted milks, Butter, cheese, preserved fruit, sardines and salted fish, ox's tongues, and sweetened singer, honey,—Oh, one has only to go to the bazaar and note how foreign countries have made markets of a whole nation in the East. Ribbons—made of silk, cotton and rubber, hair pins, brooches, combs, frills and fringes,—all imported, these are no less popular in our homes. Tools and implements which our craftsmen once used to make themselves, are no longer of indigenous origin. Saws, chisels, hammers, anvils turn-screws, borers, nail extractors, crucibles, polishing sands, trowels, hoes, bodkins and crochet, needles and thread, scissors and knives, sewing machines and knitting machines, razors and straps, emery pastes and whetting stones, safety blades, torch lights, batteries, electric appurtenances—soaps, portmanteaus, leather goods—all are foreign. Why speak of cars and busses, lorries and tractors, and aeroplanes which drain the country's wealth not by tens of hundreds, but by thousands and hundreds of thousands.

### **The Back Stroke of Machinery.**

Our fight is really a fight against the mass production which brings wealth to the rich and want to the poor. Our object is not to make the rich, richer

and the poor, poorer. This is the result of machinery. Take only a single example. A bag of paddy when pounded by hand yields a wage of 1 seer of rice and one anna to each of three women required for the task. Their work is hard out pleasant and not overlong. They come at 3 o'clock and clear out at 3 in the afternoon taking life easy, singing, chatting, strolling and perhaps stealing (a little rice) or munching it. Thus is each woman able to maintain her husband, herself and her two children. A bag of paddy then supports 3 by 4 or 12 souls. A bag of paddy yields rice which maintains 200 souls. Thus the process of pounding which yields the rice that can feed 200 stomachs, itself feeds 12 stomachs. In other words if one bag of paddy is handpounded, it finds occupation for 12 souls.

### **Contrast with a Mill.**

Now take a rice mill. It mills—shells and hules—600 bags a day with the labour of say 40 men and the capital of one person. The forty men are equivalent to 40 by 4 or 160 members fed by the wages earned by the forty so that a rice mill, milling 600 bags a day feeds 160 souls and enriches the capitalist. If the same 600 bags had been hand pounded, it would have maintained 600 by 12 or 7,200 souls as against the 160 souls red by the mill. There is the contrast. But where does the food of 7,200—160 or 7,040 souls go. It goes into the pocket of the mill-owner, it goes into fuel—petrol or oil or wood it goes into lubricating oil, taxes, bribes, interest

on capital sunk on the machinery—costs of parts renewed, natural wear and tear over the year. Thus it enriches the rich owner here in India and replenishes the coffers of the still richer manufacturers of England, Germany and America. In the same manner we can compare the wages of cloth manufacture and the hundred and one foreign articles which we are daily using. People naturally turn round and ask whether machinery is to be boycotted and whether we can do so. It is the habit of the human mind to swing like a pendulum from one end to the other.

### **Paradoxical But True.**

When Gandhi inaugurated his cult of cottage industries and the revival of homecrafts, people derisively asked whether the single bullock-cart could run a race with a motor car. We live in an age of machinery, industrialization on rapid marches, production for export, Capitalism, search for markets, political influence, Imperialism and Militarism. The gradual ascent—or it may be, descent,—from one step to another is obvious. The West in its quest of markets has found it necessary to create colonies, dependencies, spheres of interest, spheres of influence, mandated territories and what not. Yet its search and striving has borne no abiding fruit and is taking it perilously near its doom.

Wars—the ultimate instruments of arbitrament alike in the west and the east, have proved economically disappointing. It was some time in the first decade of

this century that Mr. (now Sir) Norman Angell predicted that the victor in war would be worse placed than the vanquished. Paradoxical as the statement may look, it embodies nevertheless an eternal verity. And as if to prove the paradox, the great war of the world came in good time and hath brought its lessons home to a doubting populace.

England and France came out mightily victorious from the great European war and exacted indemnities from Germany, little profiting from the uselessness of doing so, which was discovered by Germany in regard to her reparations from France in 1871. The commodities in the form of which the reparations had to be made were such as either France was manufacturing at home or importing from England. The result was that France got her coal and machinery from Germany free. These markets were accordingly disturbed and unemployment grew, both in England and France while the German workshops were busy working day and night. The unemployment figures in London which stood at 10 lakhs immediately after the war continued to range from that figure to 27 lakhs to-day, costing the state 81 lakhs of rupees per diem in the form of doles or three hundred crores of rupees per annum at the present moment.

### **Modern Western Economy.**

These are the results of the organization for war or, to be brief, of militarism, organisation in peace is

industrialism of which militarism, is the forerunner, but industrialism has proved no more profitable to England than militarism. Let us trace the facts so as to study effects of the back stroke of machinery on the economic condition of England. Ever since the invention of the Steam Engine in 1783, and the application of power to various industries in the world, the West has made rapid strides in the manufacture of goods by machinery on a scale commensurate with the possibilities of exports: and having manufactured goods for export the West has gone in search of markets in the East. Now West and East can claim an equal measure of population for between China and India alone the population comes to 75 crores as against the 75 crores of the rest of world. Again the West has been manufacturing and dumping its goods on the East. China and India have tamely submitted to the destruction of their own crafts by the import of machine-made goods from England, France, Germany, Canada, Czechoslovakia, United States and other countries.

### **Self-contained Economy.**

As soon as the Eastern nations have recovered their national consciousness they have recognized the danger of their importing these goods and the last non-violent war in India has demonstrated not merely the danger of importing but also the advantage of stopping the imports. When once disarmed Indian people have

been able to bring to terms the mightiest of the empires of the world as a proof of triumph of non-violence against violence, of truth against untruth and righteousness against inequity, the lesson has been easily and readily learnt by India's neighbours, namely, Persia, Afghanistan, Mesopotamia, Arabia and next Egypt. They too have declared a boycott of Foreign goods. What is the result? The manufacturers of the West would if the boycott told at all have no markets in the East and they cannot dump their manufactures upon themselves. Take, for instance, the Dietz lanterns that India is importing possibly to the extent of about 2 or 3 crores every year. These are all manufactured either in the United States or Germany. But if we refuse to take them, they must only cease to manufacture the goods, for almost every European country is able to manufacture such goods for herself. They would, therefore, be put to the necessity of confining their manufactures for their own consumption and not expanding them for export. When they have no exports, therefore, with which to pay for imports they must learn to be self-contained. In fact this would be the natural result for when the Foreign countries are exporting into India 72 crores of rupees worth of cloth or yarn, India pays for her imports by means of cotton and rice. If India stopped the import of cloth, England and other foreign countries would not want the Indian export of cotton to Liverpool and could not get the Rice. In other words, since India does not want Lancashire cloth England cannot get Indian rice. Indian

rice is not enough for Indian consumption as even according to English administrators 7 crores of Indians are starving on one meal a day. If, therefore, Indian rice is being exported abroad it is not because India has too much of rice, as Sir Atul Chatterjee has been advertising on behalf of the Empire Marketing Board, but because the Indian craftsmen, the spinner, the weaver, the bleacher, the ginner, the printer and the dyer, the carpenter and the ship-builder and the salt-fish manufacturer, the cobbler and the potter—has been deprived of his capacity to make a living by the exercise of his craft in the modern age. When, therefore, Swaraj brings food and raiment to every one of India's millions, the Indian craftsman will be resuscitated and will need India's rice and be able to buy it. Indian rice will not be available for export and the West will have to grow its own food. Lucknow will not be able to send 70,000 eggs per mensem as it is doing now. Likewise our tea and coffee and our oil seeds may not be available for export nor will the Western countries be able to dump their manufactures on the East so as to pay for their imports from East to West, for the Eastern countries will have stopped imports on the present large scale from the Western countries. The West will, accordingly, have to be not only content to manufacture goods for its own consumption but also will have to strive and grow its own food stuffs. In one word the Western nations will have to be self-contained as India has always been (barring the period of British invasion) It was only the other day that

the Secretary of the Lancashire Mills Association was urging that not only should Lancashire direct her attention to other trades, but that England should grow more and more her food stuffs and manufacture more and more her food-products. When thus England is reduced, or shall we not say elevated, to the position of a self-contained nationality, she will have felled down her forests and parks as she did during the last war, and grown her own cereals and pulses and got her own milk and milk products instead of importing them from India. Belgium and Holland grow their own shoes instead of rushing it from Russia and obtain their own eggs instead of importing them from Denmark and Lucknow and found their own meat within their own shore instead of rushing into New Zealand and Australia for it. When this is done there will be no need for English machinery to work at reckless speed and possibly there will be no need for machinery at all in the domain of artistic industries. The Charka and the handloom may have to invade the English Home as they have invaded Norway and cottage crafts may have to widen their own range in the west instead of confining themselves to cutlery in Sheffield, watches in Switzerland, ribs in Belgium, and lace in France. An innovation so serious as this will really mean a counter revolution to the industrial revolution of 19th century and we shall then witness in the West the cessation of the present day mad rush against time and against all sense of leisure.

### **The Right Ideal.**

Thus may we look forward to an epoch in the West when once again intellect will cease to rule the national life, but emotion will play its legitimate part therein, when the tyranny of machinery will be subdued and the cunning of the craftsman will be restored, when production will be for consumption, when a parasitic imperialism will be replaced by a self-contained and self-reliant nationalism, when the unhealthy spirit of competition will disappear making room for a healthy spirit of co-operation, when a love of the permanent will have replaced the craze for the cheap and the nasty wares of the market, when civilization will once again live on 'wholes', not on parts, when national genius will address itself to the fostering of creative endeavours and not spend itself out in devising destructive devices, when thought and life will cease to be compartmental and become composite, when religion will become not a weekly engagement at the church but an abiding inspiration in life, when finally the nation will learn to cultivate not a world conquering will but a Heaven aspiring Soul

### **VILLAGE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION.**

#### **The Village is a Self-contained Self-reliant Unit of Nationalism.**

All this is well and good. Europe must one day change its ideals. The industrial Revolution of the past 150 years has to go back upon itself probably.

We shall even grant that Germany rearming itself to-day in the face of the Treaty of Versailles and in defiance of her old enemies, is doing so merely because she has lost her markets overseas and an Industrial nation without Colonies is like a body without hands for prehension or legs for progression. The question is, has India ever been so constituted, as to be self-supporting and self-sufficing. What is the basis of the structure of Hindu Society? Upon the answer to this question depends the correctness of the plans now drawn up by the Congress to revive the Village Industries of India. What were they like?

### *Hindu Society*

It is no doubt often said that amongst the Hindus the social and religious customs as well as institutions are intertwined with each other. That is so. We, who have imbibed a little of the western culture, resent such a misjoinder of laws and institutions. But when we shed this new coating on our minds and re-examine our ancient culture, we shall not have any difficulty in understanding the rationale underlying it. The fact is, that the Hindu Religion, so called, is not a bundle of dogmas and doctrines any more than Hindu Society may be considered a bundle of formulae and customs. On the other hand Religion and society form the warp and weft of the web of Indian life and may be broadly connoted by the term Hindu culture. This culture is the real index of Hindu civilization. It is the flowering

forth of Hindu genius. It is doubtless sustained by the high inspiration which Religion always furnishes. It is the very basis of Hindu society which has seemingly divided the various communities enfolded by the term Hindu, but which has evolved a real synthesis between the numerous conflicts of life. These conflicts are not merely the fleeting fancies of the day, nor are they the sordid contests that arise in life from time to time, but they are, if we may so say, some of the eternal varities which have puzzled the genius of lawgivers, philosophers and saints. What is the relationship of wealth to knowledge, how should we reconcile the spiritual with the material longings of man? Who is the greatest of the three, Viswamitra, Valmiki or Vasishta? It is some of these problems that have been grappled with by the founders of the ancient Hindu society and the progenitors of the ancient Hindu culture.

### *Varnasrama Dharma*

Varnasrama Dharma strikes at once, even the casual onlooker, or the quick moving globe trotter, as the outstanding feature of Hindu society. It is no more a mere social attribute than child marriage is a mere social institution. Both have an economic backing behind them. The four castes of India are organized, so as to eliminate the spirit of competition amongst them, for each caste is taught to be proud of itself and is a perfect democracy within itself. Does any one say, that there is a competition amongst the four asramas of

life. No, they are as much a means to the working out of Dharma as the castes are. Only the asramas can all be passed through by the same individual in turn, while the castes have to scale up not in successive stages in the same birth but in the successive births in a cycle of life. It is easy to jibe at the theories that form the frame work of a faith, but when a scientific and dispassionate study is made of the laws and institutions of a nation, it is but right that we should shed at the very gate of investigation, our prejudices and predilections alike. In the scheme then of Varnasrama Dharma, it is clear that each Varna and each Asrama has its duties and functions clearly demarcated and defined. In other words they constitute the Dharma of each.

### *Times Change*

We have now to consider how these have degenerated in recent times and whether we can build them anew and if so how we should co-ordinate the modern conditions of life with the ancient organization of society. We have already seen that the Brahmin has stood for poverty and learning and that wealth has never been an accompaniment or prize of knowledge. Culture has doubtless been respected, yea even venerated, but it has been yoked to the ideal of service and the repositories of culture have obtained a charge for their maintenance on the State and Society. The King has maintained them by gifts and the people have

supported them by doles. The Brahmin has served the State and Society alike and is in a sense a maintenance holder. Wealth has been given away to other castes, property and physical prowess to still others and each has been taught to exalt the duties to the level of Dharma, to live for it and die in it. But times have changed, the patronage of Kings and Queens has disappeared. Hindu culture has lost its hold upon society, and alien rulers have found the need for a body of people who are learned and poor to serve their purpose, to translate their laws to the people, and translate people's longings to them in a word a body of dwi-bhashees or dubashees to serve as intermediaries, between an alien state and its subjects. The Brahmin has taken to his English education like a duck to water and having found for once in life his learning equated to wealth, now discovers, that his prosperity has been but fleeting and he is left in the mid-stream on a floating bar without oars, sails or helm. It has suited the foreign rulers to take on hand other castes and communities and these have in their national quest for power, pelf and position found themselves weaned from their hereditary occupations and enriched for a time, by their new education. Thus have villages been transferred to towns, crafts declined and a passion has grown for foreign education, foreign degrees, foreign service, foreign titles and honours until each community and caste has thought it fit to sell its ancient country and culture.

*"Miniature Cosmos"*

Let us for a moment stray into our villages and examine their past and present position as the result of this new leaven introduced into society. The village was till recently a corporate unit and even now it is so in a sense. There may not be common production or community of interest to the extent to which they existed some centuries ago, but the village continues to be a self contained and self-reliant unit of nationalism, which must be preserved and perpetuated if the Indian nation should preserve its individuality and integrity. One may correctly call the Indian villages a miniature cosmos which gets most of its needs within its precincts. It has its carpenter, smith and its house-builder and jeweller, its cobbler and farmer, its barber and washerman, its merchant and money lender, its spinner and weaver, its priest and physician. What would it matter if the village were isolated for a time. Food and clothing—the fundamental needs of man are readily found there. Contact with other villages is only for social amenities. Contact with towns has but drained into them the wealth of the village through the lawyer, the doctor and the commission agent, and from towns the flow is to the cities and from cities across the seas to continents beyond. In olden days too, we had our cities but they were the emporiums of the artistic crafts of India and served as the marts for the caravans of the world. We gave to the world our best products and did not depend upon the external world for our food or

clothing. Alas, the whole complexion of things has changed. We have become but hewers of wood and drawers of water and India has been converted from a premier civilized nation yea, from a land flowing with milk and honey into an out-house of England.

## VILLAGE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION.

### **Plea for Utilising Immense Man Power In India**

Can we recast our society now? There are immense difficulties, the foremost of which is the feeling of helplessness engendered in the people. But that is not all, not only do the people feel that all power has gone out of them but they have in addition imbibed qualities of servility and abjectness, which in the words of Sir Thomas Munro uttered over a century ago are the only qualities that can be developed in a subject nation.

#### *Duty of Hindu Community*

It behoves the great Hindu Community to address itself to the problem of the house. The Brahmin asks in despair what should be the fate of his community in future i. e., after the Communal G. O. regarding the services, as if the Brahmin had all along lived on his unpatriotic service of the foreigner. The Harijan asks when he can overtake the savarna Hindus who have stolen a Century's march over him. We say, let the Harijan of old and the Brahmin who is the *Harijan* of the present day—and all the intermediate castes and

sects direct their attention once again to the depths to which one and all have fallen alike during the centuries that have rolled by; let them consider whether they cannot restore, in the measure in which it may be possible to do so, the Socio-Economic structure of Hindu society. The caste system as it is to-day is but a counterfeit of its original. No one asks that the spurious coin must be made current. But the spirit of its organisation might well be revived. Let the Brahmin, the term connoting all men of learning of the present day minister to his fellows, wealth be separated from knowledge, craft life be restored, villages become the self contained units of nationalism and we shall have established the Indian renaissance. People will however readily ask how the single bullock carriage can run a race with the motor car. That is true. The implication in the comparison is that a reversion to the simple cottage life and the rural environments of the world is no longer possible for India in the face of hot-haste industrialism of the West. Let us grant it. But shall we not ask ourselves a simple question whether it is possible to overtake the English machinery for a country which must start its machine life from to-day virtually. Few people know the secrets of Lancashire mill machinery, which are changing almost every day, the improvements being known only to the particular manufacturers. But when we order machinery even if the manufacturers supply us up-to-date plant the interval of six to ten years, which lapses necessarily before it is set up and gets into working order, is long enough to make the

machinery antiquated in manufacturing countries themselves there is an unceasing competition between the inventions of yesterday and those of to-day. How much more of such competition would there not be between the machine supplied to India by the English people and those worked by themselves. The comparison which has been employed to decry the cottage industries of India more aptly applies to an industry like the paper mills of Rajahmundry trying to compete with those of Scandinavia. For the machinery is about a decade old and it has yet too begin to manufacturing on a commercial scale. Verily then, the single bullock cart is the jogging on industries of to-day run with effete machinery ill-equipped staff and insufficient capital.

*India's Potential Power.*

The fact is that there is no country in the world like India except China whose man power makes the land potentially rich beyond measure. It has been well said that England rules the waves but only gets the foam; China and India are the nations that have the real potentiality to rule the world. They have however no such unworthy ambition for they are quite content to be able to rule themselves. It is the man power of India, that sustains its cottage industries and enables them to hold their own against power products. The hand weaver, as is universally acknowledged has so far successfully competed with the mill-owner. What

really counts with him is his free labour. Labour,—given in the leisure hours of man, woman and child, it makes the products cheap, gives the craftsman creative joy in life and bestows on him the ownership of his own handiwork. The homes are kept together, their morals and affections are kept intact. The little extra costs involved in the production is but the bounty voluntarily paid by the patriotic consumer for resuscitating a perishing craft. Thus is ensured an even distribution of money and wages instead of accumulation of the profits in the hands of a few wealthy industrialists. It is such accumulation that has given rise in the west to sky scrapers on the one side and slums on the other. They have now nearly lost their markets in the east and they are obliged to balance their budgets and their trade by becoming self-contained and self-sufficient. That is the ideal of the olden times in our country and one which we are seeking to revive to-day.

### *Need for New Synthesis*

Let it not be thought that in pleading for a revivification of Hindu culture, and the revival of the village—or to use a widely popular term, in trying to work for an Indian renaissance, we are mixing up culture, economics and politics. Well, in ancient Hindu Society at any rate, no such compartmentalism was known. Life is one and indivisible. The economic organisation of the people was maintained through the exercise of social public opinion as much as through the discipline of a

developed conscience both being assisted by a certain allegiance to a religious idealism pervading every stratum of life. Thus it was that the upkeep of society was maintained not merely by the strong arm of the law, but by a highly developed and ever responsive public opinion, and on the top of this by a keenly sensitive conscience. The sanctions of life were thus both physical, intellectual and moral, and the last was the greatest of these. But the lapse of time hath weakened the hold of one after another in the reverse order. Society was once organized on the sublime principle that the wealth that makes a nation really strong and not merely rich is the opportunity for industry, intelligence and well-being of its labouring population. This must be particularly so in a country which is the real country of poor men. But it is the tendency, as Lowell puts it, of all creeds, opinions and political dogmas that have once defined themselves in institutions to become inoperative, for the vital and formative principle which was active during the process of crystallization into sects or schools of thought or government ceases to act and what was once a living emanation of the eternal mind, organically operative in history becomes the dead formula on men's lips and the dry topic of the annualist. Hindu culture has fulfilled the destiny visualized by this essayist-politician. It has become a dead formula and a dry topic, surviving its pristine glory only in the form of certain beliefs, ceremonies and rituals. We must therefore go back to the real motives and objects of its progenitors and transport

ourselves from the sordid facts and features facing us to-day to the atmosphere of idealism in which its various attributes had their origin. If we did so we should be able at once to recognize that the culture of a nation is the outward manifestation of its religious eminence. If religion is the stimulus, culture is the reponse, and when the religious inspiration has weakened, culture also has lost its hold upon the people. Hindu culture is not merely an intellectual flair, but the embodiment of a composite scheme of life embracing within its compass social laws and civic institutions which have withstood the buffets of ages. We have already seen how the very basis of society has been its chief concern and the balance between wealth and knowledge between the material and the spiritual has been carefully adjusted how the onslaughts of successive centuries and of successive invasions have done little havoc to them, and how the imperceptible, one had almost said, the insidious influences set at work by the contact with the Western civilization during the past 1½ centuries have permeated every stratum of society and disorganized even its foundations. The very scheme of life is upset and "a new system of values with their appropriate symbols" has come into being. Money and force have taken the place of culture and conscience, and driven the latter out of sight. Contract has taken the place of status and the new so-called democratic tendencies have liberated only forces of division. It is for Hinduism once again to install its ancient culture on a high pedestal and make that the

beacon light to the millions that are marching in darkness and despair. A new synthesis has to be evolved which would reveal a blend of the ancient ideals of life with the modern conditions of society and for this purpose an organization must be brought into existence which shall make it its purpose and its study to revive the fast perishing culture of India and make that the real key to Indian Nationalism.

### *Conclusions*

Let us summarize; India has had an ancient social organization in which each tract of country—each village is self-complete. Such an organization has been destroyed by the onslaughts of Western Industrialism. Western Industrialism is based upon mass production and competitive prices. For this purpose the world's markets are the bone of contention between rival Industrial nations. This was one of the causes of the last great war and will possibly be one of the causes of another war in the future. The markets desired by the Western Industrial nations are all found in the East. The East has become self-conscious and conscious of the subtle slavery to which it has been subjected. The Eastern nations have revolted against this invasion of their markets by foreign goods—from Japan to Egypt. Therefore two things must follow, the Eastern nations must expand their own production and contract their own wants. The Western nations must contract their production and expand their own

supplies of food and raw material. Thus both the trains on the great Eastern and the great Western Railways are approaching each other—they are for the time being moving in opposite directions. In this the East must set the example to the West. The West won't learn except by its own bitter experience. The West has passed through its bitter experience and begun to learn. Once the fundamentals are grasped, there is no point in delaying the working out of details. In India the great national organisation to undertake the task is the Congress. The Congress addresses itself now to an aggressive fighting programme and now to a constructive and reconstructing programme. In 1922 the Congress obtained respite for itself until the 12th April 1930. Again it has respite for itself since the 20th May 1934. During these intervals of rest, some people want to carry on the fight through Councils others having no faith in it would turn the opportunity to account by reconstructing the national life of the country. The first beginnings of such a reconstruction were made when the cult of Khaddar was inaugurated. Few people expected the indigenous cloth to drive out the Foreign cloth from the Indian markets. This has nearly been accomplished. An awakened national consciousness is an awakened conscience really and is a mightier force than laws, tariffs, quotas, boundaries, subventions, and depreciated currencies. Khaddar is the prince of village industries. It has done its work—but as a forerunner of a Renaissance, it must help the other village industries also to

raise their head. That is the work undertaken by Gandhiji at the bidding of the Congress—through All India Village Industries Association. We give below the resolution of the Congress and the objects of the Associations passed at its 48th sessions at Bombay, Sri Rajendra Prasad presiding —

### *Congress Resolution*

Whereas organisations claiming to advance Swadeshi have sprung all over the country with and without the assistance of Congressmen and whereas much confusion has arisen in the public mind as to the true nature of Swadeshi, and whereas the aim of the Congress has been from its inception progressive identification with the masses, and whereas village re-organisation and reconstruction is one of the items in the constructive programme of the Congress, and whereas such reconstruction necessarily implies revival and encouragement of dead or dying village industries besides the central industry of hand-spinning and whereas this work, like the re-organisation of hand-spinning is possible only through concentrated and special effort unaffected by and independent of the political activities of the Congress Shri J. C. Kumarappa is hereby authorised to form, under the advice and guidance of Gandhiji, an association called the All India Village Industries Association as part of the activities of the Congress. The said association shall work for the revival and encouragement of the said industries and

for the moral and physical advancement of the villages, and shall have power to frame its constitution, to raise funds and to perform such acts as may be necessary for the fulfilment of its objects.

*Object.*

The object of the Association shall be village reorganisation and reconstruction, including the revival, encouragement and improvement of village industries, and the moral and the physical advancement of the villagers of India.

**Mill Cloth *versus* Khadi.**

Many people often ask why mill cloth should be excluded from Khaddar and Swadeshi exhibitions, why mill cloth which is Swadeshi should not be permitted to be worn by office-bearers amongst Congressmen. For one thing mill cloth which is richly financed does not require the aid of a struggling exhibition to advertise it. Khaddar is required to be worn as a condition prerequisite to election to a place upon any elective body in the Congress organisations.

But there is a general relaxation amongst responsible men who have latterly been taking to the use of Mill cloth. Most people do not understand the economic and moral implications underlying the use of Mill fabrics. 'Is this not Swadeshi.' people ask. Yes. But all that is Swadeshi does not help the poor man. Indian polity has to be realigned not only with a view

to protecting the country from the British Imperialism but also from the clutches of the Indian capitalist.

The mills are all owned by rich capitalists drawing labourers from the villages to the towns. And when you examine the conditions of the life of the labourers and compare them with the conditions under which they have been living in the villages from which they have emigrated, the contrast will strike you as one to be viewed with the utmost sorrow.

The mill hands,—for after all they are hands, not heads—much less hearts—have no stated work. The creative faculty is dead in them. They do not manufacture an article from the beginning to the end, they feed a machine, or draw a thread, or count a number of packets, or water a particular instrument, or oil, or turn or twist, and the day's work is done. At the end of the day they have only their wages to look to, and not the work that they have created. They have not endowed the inanimate objects which constitute the raw materials, with a living shape and make them the animated finished products.

Contrast this with the work of the sculptor who takes a rough piece of stone and then carves it out into a beautiful model. Or take the weaver who weaves a piece of cloth in the whole day. He can own it, he can use it, he can sell it, he can pledge it, he can keep it against the marriage of his son. But the mill worker works the whole day and drinks half of his wages if not

three-fourths, for sheer relaxation against the work carried out under unnatural conditions, and in unexhilarating manner. What enlivens the human spirit is not the amount of wages but the joy of work. That joy is not to the workmen in the mills.

On the moral side, we see how men are separated from women, even those belonging to the same family, and men come into contact with women belonging to another family. The family working in the mills is not a unity, a compact unit, devoted to the pursuit of a creative art but is simply broken up. Even the children from the mother's lap are no exception. And in mills there is regimentation, while in the cottage industry the sanctity of the home is kept intact and the ownership of the property produced is equally intact.

People talk of the cheapness of the mill cloth but do not see that the very cheapness for which they are caring is the ruin of their poor neighbours. While appreciating the fact that a mill produces 500 lbs. of cloth a day which is equivalent to 15,000 square yards, our friends seldom realise that through the operation of that mill 1000 weavers have been thrown out of work. Next to agriculture, weaving is the commonest industry. For, next to food raiment is the inevitable concomitant of life. Therefore, when you begin to import your food products and your fabrics as well, you have destroyed the two main industries of the country. That is why we want people to eat indigenous food and wear hand-woven cloth. "If hand-woven cloth is rational, mill

cloth too is equally rational" say some, but we cannot say this, for you cannot sustain only the weaver and starve the village widow whose husband was recently dead, the poor old mother who has lost her son or the sister-in-law who would not be maintained by her brother-in-law.

It is trifles that make humanity think, as the adage goes. For if there are 300 wheels in a village, the women earn Rs.40/- a day at the rate of As. 2/- per day and in 25 days they earn Rs 1,000/-. In twelve months the village women earn Rs 12,000/- through spinning and there are villages which have earned a lakh of rupees during the past sixteen years at the old reduced rate of wage of one anna per day,—the then prevailing rate. Now the wage has been raised to As. 2/- and therefore their income should be doubled. Is this a small addition to the villager's income? Is this not really a great asset to him? Why don't people recognise this?

When I related this story of how the villages in one zamindari have been profited by this system another zamindar to whom I narrated this story jumped with joy and asked one of his officers to develop this scheme of spinning and weaving in his villages. The fact is that with one fourth of the wages earned by spinning, the village is able to pay off the cists, and rents due to the zamindar, and this enables the men in the villages to hold up their hard grown produce till the prices rise and the markets become favourable.

We have stated that each mill takes away the livelihood of 1000 weavers. Each rice mill takes away the livelihood of 1500 families a day or the food of 6,000 stomachs. Each Ginning machine puts out of employ 96 labourers a day. At this rate the figures can be calculated of people who are thrown out of employment on account of the superior productive power of the machine industries.

Where does all this extra income go? Partly into the pockets of the rich mill-owners, partly into the hands of the foreigners who manufacture the machinery, supply the fuel. and lubricating oils and the parts of the machinery and make huge profits thereby. Mills, in one word, make the rich richer and the poor poorer. This is the psychology for not using mill cloth. When the weaver is weaving on his handloom mill yarn supplied by Carnatik mills and the Binny mills and the Harvey mills, he is really supporting foreign capital invested in India. Not merely that capitalists are fed by them but that foreign capitalists are fed and therefore the profits are going to the foreign rich

From every point of view, therefore, mill cloth should not be used by those that can afford to buy Khaddar, and people who are even unable to afford—they too must buy Khaddar because it helps to give a meal to their poor neighbours. Mill cloth may appear cheap but it is not half as durable as Khaddar. This way the inequality of the prices can be levelled down. But there is another process. The men who wear Khaddar

may wear shorter length and a smaller number of tunics. In that manner also we can economise and compensate ourselves for the increased investment. After all, the extra money we pay for Khadi is a bounty given by every citizen to the languishing craft and trade of his poor neighbour and therefore is not an item of expenditure to be grudged at all by him.

The enemy of the future is not the foreign cloth. For Lancashire cloth is already dead and gone, and gone no more to return. To-day the Lancashire mill owners are falling prostrate at the feet of the Indian Trade Delegation and soliciting a favour whereby India would buy 17 crores of rupees worth of cloth from Lancashire but the Indian Delegation composed of moderates and mill owners stoutly refuses to concede the demand and have declared that no more than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  crores of rupees worth cotton fabrics will be taken from Lancashire "What is good of trading with you" ask the Lancashire merchants "No. It is no good" replies our Delegation and says "if it does not profit you, don't trade with us. Good bye" Under such circumstances we should fight the poorman's next opponent namely the mill owner, the rich man in India

Will the Congressmen also swear by the rich man and help them buy one more motor car in addition to six cars they possess, one more horse in addition to the eight horses they maintain? All these are luxuries which they enjoy only at the expense of the poor and it behoves the middle class men, upper or lower to take

measures not to enrich the rich or impoverish the poor and to this end make a point of wearing Khaddar-Khaddar wants patronage, advertisement and public support. That is why we exclude mill-cloth from Swadeshi exhibitions.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### MACHINERY—ITS BACK STROKE.

#### I

#### THE POWER INDUSTRIES LEAD TO WAR.

The invention of the steam engine about the close of the 18th century was followed by a new era of human civilisation which consisted in mass production by the application of power to the implements hitherto worked by hand. Mass production tended to make the machine-made products cheaper than their predecessors, the hand-made ones, and required large markets. This quest for markets implied a conquest of territory so as to have political and immoral influence over the conquered nations. Every article in use by the latter-hitherto made by hand is sought to be replaced by its machine-made fellow, much cheaper and ever more refined. The new scale industrialism of a large magnitude implied the maintenance of armies to carry on the struggle for a monopoly of raw products with which the machines should work and monopoly of markets in which the products of the machine must sell. In addition, the conquered nations are forced to adopt the language and manners, the fashions and fabrics, of the

conqueror so that the machine products of the Industrial civilizations of the West came to be at first imposed upon and later be popular with the people of the conquered nationalities. This scheme worked flawlessly for a time, yes for a few decades. The whole of the nineteenth century witnessed an era of prosperity of nations like England and Germany which carved out Empires in Asia and Africa and fattened upon the wealth of the two continents. But there soon came a time when production began to increase at such an accelerated pace that a state of competition began to ensue between these two predominantly European nations of the West themselves. France was as much agricultural as Industrial, Italy was more agricultural than industrial, Russia was almost wholly agricultural for the greater part of the 19th century so much so that equally with Asia and Africa, Russia had even a market for the machine products of England and Germany and was glad to exchange for them her own wheat which she was producing on a large scale. The stress and strain of industrialism however soon found its vent expressed itself in the Great European War which had its immediate origin in the Serajivo murders of the Hapsburgs — the Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess of Austria, which had, however, deeper seated and longerstanding remote causes in the spirit of industrial competition. The great European war which began on the 31st July 1913 ended on the 11th November 1918.

## II

## WARS AND THEIR REPURCUSSIONS.

The reader will excuse a little deviation here which is only apparent not real, for it is the worship of machinery and of industrialism that has led to the great war of Europe of twenty-five years ago and threatens to cause greater world wars to-day. The devastation of that war, its disastrous economic consequences and the tragedies that lie embedded in this seemingly inoffensive instrument called the steam (oil, gas or petrol) engine of the modern age, may advantageously be studied in some detail in order to realize the great dangers that loom large in the socio-economic horizon before us.

Turning first to the material losses of the great war (1914 to 1918) they are of course in the broadest sense incalculable, but approximate estimates have been made. Perhaps the best of them is the analysis made by Professor L. Bogert who places the direct costs of the war at \$186,000,000,000 and the indirect costs at \$151,000,000,000, thus arriving at the stupendous total of \$337,000,000,000 or roughly 1 lakh of crores of rupees. These well-nigh inconceivable estimates still do not adequately represent the total losses, figured even in monetary terms, for, as Professor Bogert remarks "The figures presented in this summary are both incomprehensible and appalling, yet even these do not take into account the effect of the war on life, human

vitality, economic well-being, ethics, morality or other phases of human relationships and activities which have been disorganized and injured. It is evident from the present disturbances in Europe that the real costs of the war cannot be measured by the direct money outlays of the belligerents during the five years of its duration, but that the very breakdown of modern economic society might be the price exacted."

"Yet prodigious as has been the destruction of wealth, the destruction of life is even more serious. Wealth can sooner or later be replaced, while vital losses are by their very nature irreparable. Never before were such masses of men arrayed for mutual slaughter. During the late war nearly 60,000,000 soldiers were mobilized and the combatants suffered 33,000,000 casualties of whom nearly 8,000,000 were killed or died of disease, nearly 19,000,000 were wounded and 7,000,000 taken prisoners. The greatest sufferer was Russia which had over 9,000,000 casualties while next in order came Germany with 6,000,000 and France with 4,500,000 casualties. The British Empire had 3,000,000 casualties. America's losses were relatively slight, the total casualties being a trifle under 300,000.

"And this is only the beginning of the story. The figures just quoted refer only to fighting men. They take no account of the civilian population. But the civilian losses were simply incalculable, especially in Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire. It is estimated that for every soldier killed, five civilians perished

by hunger, exposure, disease, massacre, or heightened infant mortality. The civilian deaths in Poland and Russia are placed at many millions while other millions died in Turkey and Serbia through massacre and starvation. One item alone will give some idea of the wastage of human life during the war. The deaths beyond the normal mortality due to influenza and pneumonia induced by the war are estimated 4,000,000. The total loss of life directly attributable to the war is probably fully 40,000,000. While if decreased birth rates be added the total would rise to nearly 50,000,000. Furthermore, so far as civilian deaths are concerned the terrible conditions prevailing over a great part of Europe since the close of 1918 have caused additional losses relatively as severe as those during the war years.

“The way in which Europe’s population has been literally decimated by the late war is shown by the example of France. In 1914 the population of France was 39,700,000. From this relatively moderate population nearly 8,00,0000 were mobilized during the war. Of these nearly 1,400,000 were killed, 3,000,000 were wounded and more than 400,000 were made prisoners. Of the wounded between 800,000 and 900,000 were left permant physical wrecks. Thus fully 2,000,000 men,—mostly drawn from the flower of French manhood—were dead or helplessly incapacitated.

“Meanwhile the civilian population was also shrinking, omitting the civilian deaths in the northern compartments under German occupation, the excess of

deaths over births was more than 50,000 for 1914, and averaged nearly 300 000 for the four succeeding war years. And the most alarming feature was that these losses were mainly due, not to deaths of adults, but to a slump in the birth rate. French births which had been 600,000 in 1913 dropped to 315,00 in 1916 and 343,000 in 1917. All told it seems probable that between 1913 and 1919 the population of France diminished by almost 3,000,000 nearly one-tenth of the entire population "

Mr. Irvin describes the cumulative process by which the fittest were selected for death

" I take it for granted " he says " that in a general way, the bravest are the best physically and spiritually Now in this war of machinery, this meat-mill, it is the bravest who lead the charges and attempt the daring feats and correspondingly the loss is greatest among those braves " so much when the army gets into line. But in the conscript countries like France and Germany, there is a process of selection in picking the army by which the best, speaking in general terms, go out to die, while the weakest remain. The undersized the undermuscle, the underbrained, the men twisted by hereditary deformity or devitalized by hereditary disease—they remain at home to propagate the breed. The rest, all the rest, go out to take chances. " Furthermore, as modern conscript armies are organized it is the youngest men who sustain the heaviest losses—the men who are not yet fathers. And from the point of view of race that is perhaps the most melancholy fact of all.

“ All the able-bodied men between the ages of nineteen and forty five are in the ranks But the older men do not take many chances, with death.. ... These European conscript armies are arranged in class according to age and the younger classes are the men who do most of the actual fighting. The men in their late thirties or their forties, the ‘territorials’ guard the lines, garrison the towns, generally attend to the business of running supplies. When we come to gather the statistics of this year we shall find that an overwhelming majority of the dead were less than thirty years old and probably that the majority were under twenty-five. Now the territorial of forty or forty five has usually given to the state as many children as he is going to give. While the man of twentyfive or under has usually given the state no children at all.”

Furthermore it must be remembered that those disgenic effects which I have been discussing refer solely to losses inflicted upon the actual combatants. But we have already seen that for every soldier killed the war took five civilian lives In fact, the wars’ profoundly devitalizing effects upon the general population can hardly be overestimated. Those effects include not merely such obvious matters as privation and disease, but also obscurer yet highly destructive factors like nervous shock and prolonged overstrain To take merely one instance, consider Havelock Ellis’s remarks concerning “the ever widening circles of anguish and misery and destitution which every fatal bullet imposes

on humanity." He concludes. "It is probable that for every 10,000,000 soldiers who fall on the field 50,000,000 other persons at home are plunged into grief or poverty or some form of life diminishing trouble. To show only one of the many causes that to-day keep down the birth-rate take the crushing burden of taxation which hits especially the increase of the upper classes. The London Saturday Review recently explained this very clearly when it wrote; "From a man with £. 2,000 a year the tax gatherer takes £. 600 The remaining £. 1400 owing to the decreased value of money, has a purchasing power about equal to £. 700 a year before the war No young man will therefore think of marrying on less than £. 2000 a year. We are thinking of the young man in the upper and middle classes. The man who starts with nothing does not as a rule, arrive at £ 2000 a year until he is past the marrying age. So the continuance of the species will be carried on almost exclusively by the class of manual workers of a low average calibre of brain. The matter is very serious. The economic difficulties of Europe as a whole at the signature of peace may be almost summarized in the phrase "demoralized productivity". The production of necessities for this 450,00,000 population (including Russia) has never been at so low an ebb as at this day.

"A summary of the unemployment bureaus in Europe will show that 15,000,000 families are receiving unemployment allowances in one form or other, and

are in the main, being paid by constant inflation of currency. A rough estimate would indicate that the population of Europe is at least 100,000,000 greater than can be supported without imports, and must live by the production and distribution of exports; and their situation is aggravated not only by lack of raw materials and imports, but also by low production of European raw materials. Due to the same production Europe is to-day importing vast quantities of certain commodities which she formerly produced for herself and can again produce. Generally in production she is not only far below even the level of the time of the signing of the armistice, but far below the maintenance of life and health without an unparalleled rate of import.

“From all these causes accumulated to different intensity in different localities, there is the essential fact that unless productivity can be rapidly increased there can be nothing but political, moral and economic chaos, finally interpreting itself in loss of life on a scale hitherto undreamt of.

### III

#### REMEDIES TO THE REPURCUSSION OF WARS.

It was Norman Angels that predicted and proved in the early years of the century how the economic consequences of wars were more destructive to the victors than to the vanquished. He illustrated his theory in relation to the Boer war. He has lived to see

his theory once again proved by the great European War and has received a knighthood from the British Government in recognition of his great services to the Nation. We have elsewhere shown how after the war the workshops of Germany were buzzing day and night with work while France and England were suffering from acute unemployment. The fact is that not only the direct and immediate, but the indirect and distant consequences—the sequel of the great war has been that the nations of the East have learnt to boycott the imports of manufactures from the Western countries—notably England and Germany. The Lancashire trade in textile declined astonishingly. In 1936-37 our imports from Britain amounted to 334 million yards of India's total consumption of 5,750 million yards i.e. about 5·8 percent of the total.

During the period between 1913-1919 and 1936-37 Lancashire's share has fallen from 58 percent to 5·8 percent the share of Indian mill production has increased from 22 percent to 62·1 percent while Japan's share rose from an insignificant figure to 7·2 percent. Apparently Lancashire's aim seems to be to secure at least as high a share of the Indian piecegoods-market as Japan. Putting things more simply British textile imports declined from 50 crores in 1913 to seven crores in the year 1937. To-day the Indo-British negotiations have in spite of two visits of the Indian section to England and two visits of the British section to India ended in failure. The British would have India take

900 lakhs of yards of cloth while India is not willing to take more than 666 lakhs of yards. Nor does Britain agree to the negotiations carried on by the Indian Delegation nominated by the Indian Government.

So far as can be ascertained while the Delegation refuses to guarantee consumption of a fixed quota of Indian cotton in return for a certain proportion of imports of British piecegoods into India and would have us remain satisfied with assurances of her continuing to make efforts to increase her intake, its demand on the other side is for a definite guarantee of 660 million yards of Lancashire goods. The Present duty of 20 percent should be reduced in the first instance to 14 so that India may import minimum of 600 million yards, but if this reduction in duty should prove inadequate another slice should come off the tariff and another, each time to the extent of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  percent, until the above specified minimum has come into India. The tariff would remain at that level until the full quota is reached of 660 million yards, but it would be open to us to raise the level of duties if there is a possibility of our imports. Indian representatives were unwilling according to one view, to go beyond 400 million yards and since the gap obviously is too wide for bridging settlement, the other points were not attempted.

And who are these delegates? Not fire-eating non-co-operators, not extremists and ex-civil disobedience prisoners but moderates, merchants and mill owners—men like Sir Purushottam Das Thakurdas,

Kasturbhai Lalbhai, Lala Sri Ram and G. Birla. The yoke of Lancashire has been found too heavy for the Indian bulls to bear and it has literally been thrown down. The British Empire in India has been the Empire of Lancashire mills over the Indian people's nakedness. To-day Lancashire is beseeching India not to forget her old comrade. It will be thus seen that the Empire of Machinery is doomed. The handwriting on the wall clearly points to that doom. But it is merely the economic and the commercial aspects of the age that have found themselves betrayed by the march of events, the moral side of the picture is much more damaging to the machine than these.

#### IV

### THE ETHICS OF THE MACHINE

When we condemn the machine we do not indulge in a superstition. What we really condemn is the overpowering mastery of the machine age, its developing attack on life, the thralldom it has imposed upon the village, the destruction of human skill and individuality, the promotion of a new individualism tending to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, the demoralization of homes and families throughout the country and finally the virtual state of perpetual war between nations which has become a stable feature of national life all the world over.

Let us study these aspects in closer detail. Under the stress of machine, time and distance have

been annihilated, the burden of mechanical labour has been lightened, the intensity of human suffering mitigated. And the culture of the materialistic age has become attractive not merely to the urban but to the rural population as well. Distant voices are heard, distant scenes are reproduced. A new magic and mesmerism has pervaded life with telling influences on human emotion as well as human understanding; captains of industry have sprung into existence overnight and huge wealth has become accumulated; outwardly a new fellowship appears to have been generated not merely between individuals but between groups of people and even nations. But a new monster has been brought into being, the monster of selfishness of which there is another avatar namely the monster of competition. This generated the doctrine of Free Trade and the new cult sailed under the charming colours of Liberalism. But the doctrine of selfishness cannot be monopolized by a few aristocrats or a few middle class leaders. The former put in the capital and produced the goods, the latter distributed them and both became rich creating a struggle in society in which the lower strata are always striving to rise to the next higher level. But the upper and middle classes the conservatives and the liberals, the capitalists and the retail traders have all left the lower classes, the labourers severly to themselves. A new movement has therefore come into existence — the Labour movement, an attenuated socialist movement, an intensified liberal movement, under which the lot of labour has been

considerably improved politically by the franchise, economically by increased wages and by bonuses and socially by various insurances and benefits and doles. But none of these dopes has served to stupefy the real producers of wealth, for appetite grows with eating. Strikes on the part of labourers and locks-out on the part of capitalists, sabotaging by the employed and shooting by the employers have put the two into a perpetual state of mutual dread.

In the mean time the labour saving machine has tended to undergo daily improvements. If yesterday's devices served to perform the task of a hundred, through the labour of only ten, to-day's contrivances are helping to get the same task done by but one person. The result is between day-before yesterday when work was given to a hundred and to-day when work is given to one, there is created unemployment of ninety-nine. To-day's inventions have thus become the enemy of yesterday's discoveries and both have become the worn enemy of ninety-nine out of a hundred labourers.

While this is the internal canker that is eating into the vitals of the industry itself, the fact broadly remains that the new towns and cities which have sprung into existence in the wake of new industries have become not only unhealthy and congested in themselves but have become the enemies of the villages and their crafts. The soil and its inexhaustible resources have been abandoned. The deftness and dexterity of the village artisan has been deliberately

neglected and has therefore undergone what we may call "disuse atrophy". Unemployment stares the people in the face and a benign government frankly disowns all responsibility for the starvation and wastage going on in the country. The higher the advance in technology, the greater the starvation first of body and then the soul.

## V

The Empire of machine has grown to disproportionate heights and bulk and like the Roman Empire of old has begun to crumble by its own weight and magnitude. It cannot last long. The competition that has been engendered in society has tended very naturally to terminate itself with the awakening of individual self-consciousness amongst the labouring classes. It has thus become inevitable that one nation cannot any longer be dependent upon another. It cannot be that one nation can be rolling in wealth and another be content to remain its slave. The day is not remote when each nation will be self-contained in itself. It is both an economic and geographical necessity. India is peculiarly well-situated for attaining such an ideal. When once a nation is self-contained it cannot consent to allow two classes again to spring in it—one the capitalist master and the other, the labouring slave. Each province will tend to become self-contained if possible and each village if it comes to that. In India it came to that five thousand years ago and to-day we are rediscovering the socialism of by-gone ages.

The theory that territorial units should be self-contained that village crafts should be revived, does not mean that the machine should be abjured. If that were so we should not be using the motor car, the railway and the telegram, our spectacles, pens and pencils, medicines, and various other articles of daily use. The machine should cease to be an instrument used exclusively for amassing wealth. As a labour saving instrument it has its own place and function in society but when the saving of labour results in creating starvation on one side and glut of wealth on the other side the machine ceases to be a servant and becomes a master. To condemn the machine altogether, because it has bred evils of a far-reaching character is not to revert to primitive or mediaeval times. If the worship of industrialism, if the pursuit of profits, if the passion for rising prices should result in the burning of millions of pounds of coffee, ploughing down thousands of acres

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- \* Within the last two years (June 1933) Brazil had destroyed 1,855,524,000 lbs of Coffee, the world's population being 1,849,500,000 or 1 lb. per capital

Instead of putting money into circulation, capital destroys food  
In 1934, in order to keep prices up, 1 million waggons of wheat were destroyed, as well as 267,000 sacks of coffee, 560,000 bushels of sugar, 50,000 kilos of rice and the same amount of meat

At Tunis approximately 13,800 acres of vineyards were pulled up and legislative measures provide for another 6,900 acres to be destroyed. At the same time statistics of the Bureau of Statistical Research of New York show that 2,400,000 men died of hunger in 1934, while 1,200,000 committed suicide because of their distressed condition

of cotton, destroying tons of fruit and drying up hundreds of cows in Jersey then we hold up our hands in pious horror and say 'Oh, save us from the machine age.' To-day we care more for prices less for produce. We curse the depression because it has cheapened paddy. In other times, we should have welcomed such a cheapening. But we are living in an age when it looks as though our hunger is for coin not crops.

A story is told of † how one Christmas afternoon several years ago there was a man whose Christmas pudding had evidently been too liberally flavoured with brandy, trying to push a bicycle up a steep hill. He contrived to make the bicycle seem alive; it pushed him all the road, and finally threw him head over heels into a ditch, completing the music-hall effect by falling on the top of him.

I could not help thinking that this exactly what the Machine is doing to Man all over the industrial world. We contrive to make the Machine seem not only alive but malignant, and this happens because we are not in full possession of our wits.

"We try to push the Machine so as to give ourselves more work, and Machine retorts by throwing us into the ditch

"In spite of endless efforts on our part to thwart the Machine it insists upon doing more and more of the work, putting us on ever shorter working hours, with

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† The Social Order, Jan 9, 1933

the result that we are faced with the prospect of leisure ; and leisure in a world designed for lifelong work does not seem to us a very pleasant notion.

*“In England recently, representatives of more than 200 voluntary organisations, education authorities and industrial undertakings met and set up a committee to carry out a national survey on this problem of the use of leisure.*

“Sir Wyndham Deeds, who presided, said leisure was “free time ” in which people could do what they liked and become human beings instead of mere industrial drones. Working hours were shorter, but there were millions to whom leisure was a mere mockery.

“Captain J. H. Blaksley, of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology, said that ninety per cent of the population was engaged in work below its mental capacity.

“According to another speaker, all but ten per cent of us are engaged in work which is below our mental capacity. Think what this means. Suppose a sixth form boy at school were forced to work with fourth form ; or suppose a qualified doctor of experience were compelled to spend his life as medical student.”

“Anyone who is alive must continue to learn, to progress ; if he stands still in one place, something dies in him.

“The mass production processes, after a certain length of time, have just this effect on a man. They

deaden him, arrest his psychological worth. Yet, according to one speaker, young people are actually getting to like being slowly murdered in this way !

“ Some people are beginning to feel that the Machine is an evil thing. We don't think it is any more evil in itself than the Christmas reveller's bicycle. It is our fogged condition which is at fault. We don't realise what is happening to us.

“ What kills us is allowing the machine to push us over into the ditch. The no-work, no-pay rule makes our labours a soul destroying drudgery and our leisure hours a farce.

“ And leisure ? Ah, that is indeed something to be dreaded. Drug addicts must live in their dreams, not in reality. Better not give ourselves time to think. Besides, as St. Catherine, said too much meditation on an empty stomach is not a good thing, even for religious development. One has to eat, and to eat one must go on working.

“ The machine, if it could think, would be mightily surprised at us. It is so very willing to feed us. But we won't let it ! ”

Machinery, in its backstroke, has caused a stagnation of natural human talent, a cessation of the circulation of the life blood of the nation, a distemper in the body politic, and an embarrassment to the heart of the people so that the national pulse does not beat in unison with the throb of the central impulse. A

nation so disorganised will not take long to become diseased and ultimately die. India is already well on its way to such a sad death. It is fortunate that before the last breath has become extinct Gandhi has descended much as an avathar on a decaying world in order to destroy the evil of *wealth* and restore the good of *service*, to obliterate competition and rehabilitate co-operation, to drive out hatred and replant love in the human heart.

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# CHAPTER IX

## SOCIALISM THE SIXTH ACT OF THE DRAMA

### OR

### A NEW AGE INDEED

It is fashionable to call each age a new one and the strangest aspect of the matter is that every advance in the flow of eternity is said to mark the beginning of such a new age. This may be extravagance in optimism. Yet no one can gainsay the supposition that a new age may be regarded as commencing with the lapse of fifty years in the career of the Congress. With this march there is a concurrent march of ideas as well. India is to-day at the threshold of such a new age. The impact of old ideas and new, the conflict of ideals underlying the two, is bound to bring into existence a seeming chaos out of which a new cosmos awaits evolution. To the man who watches the detailed processes of a change, everything seems to be at six's and sevens. So does cooking in the kitchen, incomplete furniture in a carpentry shop, a house that is being built, fabric on the loom or even an article to the press that is being shaped before it is typed and placed on the Editor's table. The question is whether Indian nationalism which is being now reconstructed on the anvil of the Indian National Congress is likewise passing through a new stage of its evolution. Let us study some recent developments.

Fifty years ago we thought every one should learn English in order that he might exercise his franchise. A knowledge of English was considered the inevitable corollary of English rule which was considered inescapable and believed to be eternal. To-day we speak in terms of our own rule and our own tongue. With this awakened self-consciousness we have set ourselves the task of re-examining not merely our political destiny and national language but our cultural conditions, our socio-economic states, our civic laws and our ethical ideals. We recognise that side by side with preserving our National tradition and temperament, we have to charge both with a certain dynamic current that cannot but transform the face of society and evolve a New Social Order which is neither a copy of conditions, western, nor reproduction of conditions eastern, old ideas of feudalism have to yield way before the onrush of modern concepts of freedom and equality. Old notions of STATUS have to make room for new slogans of CONTRACTS. When Status disappears socialistic schemes of life rush in all fill up the vacuum.

In Lucknow we have witnessed some such changes. The revivalistic tendencies exhibited during the past fifteen years have been held in check by the radical forces operating at the last session of the Congress. That was indeed the first reaction of the Nation to Gandhism. Gandhi courted this change in a sense. He saw an element of opposition rising in the breast of the younger generation and like true Satyagrahi he felt

in himself the urge to allow full freedom play to his opponents to test the eternal verities upon which he had planned his philosophy of life. Was it not at Karachi at the public meeting held in advance of the Congress session that he had declared "Gandhi may die but Gandhism will live for ever?" Yes, if any *ism* should live for ever it could not do so by mere suffering or by the indulgence of opponents, or even by the semimystical halo that might gather round its founder, with his magical power of endurance and self-exaltation exhibited from time to time. The author and founder of a new cult must be prepared to give the reins to an opposition which is struggling to get into power and allow it either to get the better of him or make way for him. After sixteen years of propaganda and organization Gandhi has thought fit to invite Jawharlal and install him once again on the Gadi of the Congress. It was an unenviable position that the young Tribune found himself in. The country had doubtless offered him a solace in his bereavement which would drown his grief in the rush of life to which he was invited. He was only too willing to accept the honour which, however he knew was no bed of roses; and it is no exaggeration to say that it proved a crown of thorns.

The Congress in Lucknow was tossed about between the old and the new. The old constitution passed in Bombay only in October 1934 was torn to tatters and the former spectacular ideal has been fully restored. It is however fair to say that the central idea of maintaining a unity of plan and purpose in the Working

Committee, the A. I. C. C and the various Provincial Congress Committees was maintained in letter though the President himself was forced to break it in spirit in the matter of forming his Working Committee. Few would have cared to remain in office after the experiences that Jawaharlal passed through in Lucknow. At every turn his voice was resisted; his programme had to be softened and his ideals ultimately became attenuated. He would have liked to organise mass contacts for the Congress by ensuring adequate representation *inter alia* to organized peasant and labour associations, but that would have overwhelmed the Congress by numbers not wedded to its creed. He would have been happy if the principle of abolition of landlordism had been incorporated in the Agrarian Programme or at any rate included in the terms of reference, but that would have meant a sure jeopardy to the immediate task of the Congress in the country. He would have been gratified if the country had spurned the Government of India Act not merely in name but in reality as well but that would have bisected the National Congress. Swallowing therefore these several rebuffs, the President was faced with one of two alternatives of resignation of office or resignation of himself to his environment. The former would be a blow to the Congress at a critical moment in its history. The latter would be a blow to himself at a critical moment in his life. He has patriotically and with true self-abnegation preferred the latter to the former and formed a working committee which appears to the Congress to be its own

executive but which means to him his own. Politics is not logic and like the rest of life cannot be fashioned by unbending laws or syllogisms.

Nevertheless Lucknow has given the Congress a new orientation. It may have been noticed that not even usual lip homage has been paid to Khadder and the village Industries though the retention of the clause regarding compulsory wear of Khadder as a qualification for election must be treated as proof of the soundness of the National heart at its core. The Congress High Command to-day has its doubts regarding the sacramental character of spinning and Khadder though it may not combat their economic value in the prevailing condition of the country. When a change overtakes an organization that change does not penetrate every one of its nooks and corners. If that were so the change would be a transformation and not merely a transition. The disregard shown for the constructive programme, the enthusiasm though subdued, exhibited for formation of ministries and the keen desire to get away from the ethical shackles which Congress has forged for fifteen years are evidences of a new spirit of hovering over the Congress and seeking to challenge its fundamental principles.

### THE SIXTH ACT OF THE DRAMA

When we study the plot and development of the Congress drama, we find that there is a unity of plan as well as execution. A nation that was entirely disorganized under the onslaughts of foreign conquest and

standing stupefied had to be revived into life and the first dawn of self consciousness only kept before mind's eye a new environment created by the foreign masters. Rule was a reality and all that one could do was to seek to improve it, to catalogue the grievances and obtain their redress. The normal condition could not be restored and the patient had to be satisfied with temporizing remedies. That was the *era of Reforms*, in the first Act of the Drama. As the shock of the first awakening subsided and mental balance was recovered, people began to realize that they were being deluded into wrong attitudes and instead of being given their lost dominion, were served plums and puddings. So they demanded in 1906 self-Government the second Act of the Drama, but were afraid to call it Swaraj—although the President of the Year, Dadabhai had used it in Calcutta Congress. Thus began the second Act of the Drama—the *era of Swaraj* which went on with its vicissitudes till the year 1917 when the advent of Mrs. Beasant into the scene opened out a new vista altogether. She called her ideal, 'Home Rule' and yet came into violent conflict with Government. This, the third Act of the Drama extended into the year 1921 when Gandhi appeared on the stage and introduced the Fourth Act—the era of Swaraj. But "Swaraj" left the position of Indian to be diversely interpreted and made it necessary in the year 1929 to define it as complete Independence. That was the fifth Act. It is doubtful how far the adjective here improves the noun. However that be, the expression savours more of the

negative than the positive and should be taken really as governing the expression 'Swaraj'.

One may naturally ask—what next? What shall the sixth Act be? Shall it be the Epilogue or only a stage previous to it? It is time that the nation visualised before itself what sort of society it would construct under its Swaraj in which she could maintain complete Independence. It is really poorna Swaraj. What shall be its features and attributes? Will it be a democracy a plutocracy or an aristocracy? Will it be a Fascist state or a Socialist organization? If the latter, will it merely ape Socialism as Australia and England have done, or will it face facts and work out socialism to its logical conclusion—Bolshevism? These are natural questions to put and must be answered. The young are more curious than the old. The latter are satisfied with their achievements, the former wish to see ahead. Those who have turned grey in the service of their country were once young and when their elders asked for Reforms they visualized self-Government. This soon became out-of-date and gave place to Home Rule which has long become a back number and was replaced by Swaraj which itself had to be amplified. Thus if you turn up the layers of the Congress you will find that the structure reveals several strata and a regular development. The demand of the socialist is but the topmost stratum of this structure.

But when we speak of Socialism, let us not merely be fascinated by the phraseology of the West.

We have in so many respects merely copied occidental fashions. In any case our socialism shall not be the homage that the vice of riches pays to the virtue of poverty. Much less shall it be the blood price that destitution demands of opulence. Let socialism be as much Indian as Swaraj, as Khadder, as National Education, as worship in religion and faith in philosophy. Let the structure of Indian society and its functions be investigated and rediscovered. The ancients spoke of a Krithayuga where property and the basic industries were the common assets of the community, where they knew not selling or buying, profits or losses, riches or poverty abundance or want. The cycle of time found an end to such an age and brought in its successor—Treta followed by Dwapara and then by Kaliyuga in which we find our lot cast in life. It is the Kali age that has introduced the existing disparities of high and low into life and built up sky scrapers by the side of slums. The problem is how shall we equalize the chances of men and women in life and ensure food and raiment to all. Shall we revive our villages and their crafts and guarantee the sale of their products or shall we disestablish our villages and congest our towns and augment our unemployment and then ask for the demolition of mills, disestablishment of property and distribution of assets. We see that even the much lauded Soviets are returning to a measure of recognition of private ownership in order to ensure individual initiative. In Russia the pendulum has swung only to the other end and by mere force alone cannot be kept in its

present slanting position. Sooner or later it will assume the vertical position. Let us therefore by all means condemn Capitalism and its selfishness, industrialism and its horrors, machinery and its mischief, but let us also turn over the soil of our civilization and introduce only those changes that would fit in with the conditions and traditions of society.

The Socialist has started with the same odium as the Non-Cooperator or the Home Ruler or the Swarajist. Every new cult is subject to a withering criticism in its infancy but it soon survives the calumny and abuse of its traducers and its principles are bound to command general acceptance. So will those of the socialist. He has acted wisely in not putting a premium upon the machinations of the third party in the country by butting in his cult even as we are struggling for the establishment of complete Independence. It has always been our internecine quarrels—territorial or tribal clannish or communal—that have given a firm hold to the foreigner and it is well that the Socialist is not embroiling Indian social philosophy while yet the enemy is with us. After we have settled with him it will be time for us to settle between ourselves. But in the mean time we must educate. If the Socialist believes in non-violence, he will be able to remove society in a manner which will be slow but abiding, but if he believes in violence he will introduce his changes quicker, perhaps, but they will be more transient and more confusing. In the meantime let us pull together; the

Congress Socialists have to be congratulated upon agreeing to work within the Congress. But remaining within their work will greatly gain in value if they seek to win their elders by easy arguments of love, for there is nothing that will not yield to dignity, decency and decorum in life

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## CHAPTER X

### INDIAN SOCIALISM RE-DISCOVERED.

Indian renaissance must be as vast and multi-faced as Indian civilisation itself, and Indian civilisation is an ancient stream of culture which has developed civic laws and social institutions seemingly of such a bewildering character that, although in their confluence there does exist a fundamental unity, more people are struck by the wild variety that meets the eye than the fine homogeneity that lies deep seated behind it. It is fashionable to speak of socialism, side by side with reform of marriage laws and inheritance systems. But in this rebirth of Indian civilisation, the student and scholar concerned with the science of sociology comes across solutions, hoary with age and sanctified by centuries of vogue, which the superficial critic often either does not see, or seeing dismisses as fantastic. The venerable Dr Bhagavan Das, better known by his unadorned name for his wide culture and saintly simplicity, has discharged a noble duty by addressing himself to the task of inviting public attention to the principles of ancient scientific socialism in comparison with those of its modern counterpart. In this study he shows up the contrast between a socialism that is based upon a materialistic interpretation of history and spirituo-materialistic interpretation thereof, between one that

fosters class-war and one that promotes class-cooperation, between one again, that stands for equality and one that stands for equitability. In other words, the contrast is between dictatorship on the one hand and a balanced distribution of power in society so as to reconcile individual speciality with social solidarity between a wholesale break with the past and a healthy preservation of tradition which makes the past live in the present and the present herald the future.

In this system of ancient socialism, religion, family, and property are not abolished but are purified, by a control of priestcraft, financial jugglery, and individual selfishness. This is the argument of Bhagavadas's thesis, and he pours into his work such a volume of learning, knowledge and wisdom that it is impossible to cull out from this ocean of culture samples of its waters to prove to an ignorant, superstitious and perverted world their true life-giving character. Yet we have to taste a few drops of this eternal spring and satisfy our doubting minds that we have in our culture and in our institutions a 'well and truly laid foundation of a social system which applies on a large scale, to a society as a whole, the simple ideal of the joint family; only a compromise is made and it is provided, as the author points out, by the scheme of four joint families side by side with guilds each with its own sub-divisional joint families, and subordinate sectional guilds, all under the supervision of a central legislature of spiritual elders.

The problem for India is whether it is to copy the socialism of England, with its modifications effected through the countries of Europe, and perfect in that border country between Europe and Asia known as Russia, or whether we have to re-examine the foundations of our ancient social system and rediscover the age-long principles therein embedded, which have ensured food and raiment to all and maintained a balance between honour, authority, wealth, and service, or, in other words, honoraria, salaria, profits, and wages. In the West, there prevails a love of change ever so frequent, fundamental, even suicidal, that we in the East are tempted, if for no other reason, at least out of sheer disgust of it all, to adhere to what is essentially and, if we may say so, anciently ours, in which there is a certain permanence and immutability, recognised and valued as such. The West has created conditions in the name of change and progress which have established vicious circles from which neither the West nor the East sees any escape. It has substituted haste for leisure, money for service, quantity for quality, export for consumption, contract for status, and rights for duties, so much so that, in a word, it worships at the shrine of competition while we worship at the shrine of co-operation. If this one fundamental difference admitted, then the study of the two civilisations and the two systems of socialism becomes easy.

Caught up in the vicious circles it has created, the Western civilisation creates fast-moving motors,

and builds separate roads to prevent accidents; it provides ambulance cars, equally fast moving and equally accident causing. Both succeed in creating noise, and 'silence zones' are created in cities. Cities lead to slums, and congestion—relief schemes are promulgated at great cost. To cover the cost, taxes are increased. To pay the increased taxes, profiteering is pursued, and profiteering and taxing on the one hand and machinery and exports on the other, pursue each other like a jackal hunting its own tail. Production for export leads to the 'quota' system and the spectre of trade balance compels restriction of imports. All these lead to Imperialism which, in plain words, means militarism and industrialism. When all countries aim at this Imperialism, they become a pack of hounds hunting one another. For, the jackals of the East, which have consented to be a willing prey so far, have raised a revolt of self-respect, from Japan to Egypt.

Europe has now discovered that every country cannot have a favourable trade balance, for it is like every family demanding a dowry for the marriages and none consenting to give or being obliged to give. It means that in society all are bridegrooms and there are no brides. Likewise in Europe, all nations want to be exporters and none importers, and when the East has refused to receive the exported goods from Europe the economic system of the West has compelled the exporting nations of the West to carry coals to Newcastle. The industrialism of the West has been weighed in the

balance and found wanting. It has only created cities with all the attendant evils, slums and sensations, swift-moving traffic and ceaseless noise, disease and brothels, mills and exploitation of labour and finally a love of wealth selfishness and sin. The whole intelligence of man and his resourcefulness is being exhausted in discovering remedies for these evils. Town-planning schemes, boy-scouts and girl guides, silence zones, Cinema Acts and Brothel Acts, old age homes, orphanages, hospitals, asylums and refuges for 'fallen' sisters, labour laws, and factory legislation, missionary organisations and socialism—all these have come into being, and we in India are deliberately copying the evils long after they have been discovered to be such.

We do not deny that religion, property, and family have stood as the foundations of Indian society, that each of these has led to its own evils. But it is not right for us in studying any system to take it in its degenerate forms. Indian society has ceased to grow for over a thousand years i.e. ever since the foreigners set foot in this country. The impact of the foreigner has created a new struggle, and the contrasts already set forth have made havoc of an indescribable character. Let us go back to Manu and study the system of Indian socialism in its purest form, and the eternal principles upon which it is based,—a certain amount of individualism and of personality with its primal incidents of food, property, and family,—and we shall be able to understand that the people of old organised for internal

peace and laid out a scheme of universal social organisation, as well as what may be called individual organisation. Not only is society divided vertically into groups but each individual's life is horizontally divided into Ashramas, so that the pursuit of wealth is all along subordinated to the ideal of service, and international peace is related to social peace, even as social peace is related to piece of the family and of the individual. The four main departments of life are kept in charge of four main guilds or trusts or corporations, controlled by a code of socio-economic laws based upon a religious sanction. The vocation, the means of livelihood, the way of living, and the mission in life are all chalked out for each group and the difference between a society based on guilds and one based on external authority is shown to be "the difference between a self-nourishing, self-repairing, self-renewing, self-propagating, living organisation on the one hand, and a dead machine requiring constant attention and perpetual artificial cleaning, oiling, repairing, renewing, replacing, and power-supplying by another on the other hand."

It is not possible within a short compass to summarise the study made in such profound detail of the various systems, rather '*isms*' that have now come into vogue in the West, and of the ancient socialism in India which Dr. Bhagavan Das interprets. India recognises with Hegel that "a people is not an accumulation of separate individuals artificially united by conscious agreement for their mutual advantage ..but a spiritual

unity for which and by which its members exist." From this is supposed to spring the Fascist idea of the Corporate State and the subordination of the individual to the State, of the part to the whole, but being carried to an excess the result is that "the general conception of Fascism is based on a rigid hierarchy." No wonder that in practice such a rigid hierarchy becomes a despotic bureaucracy—a feature common to both Communism and Fascism, and also to state Capitalism as in India, but, says Babu Bhagavan Das; "Such relentless subordination of the individual is an exaggeration of the half-truth that 'each is for all'. The other half of the truth is equally important. That 'all is for each,' that the *Sutratma* is for *Jivatma* also, as much as the latter is for the former. Manu duly interweaves the two. His *Ashram Dharma* of the individual and *Va na Dharma* of the society are as warp and woof, for the individual is also a whole and not merely a part." The author points out that, according to the Marxian theory Feudalism is superseded by the Middle-class State of the squirearchy and the bourgeoisie, and the middle-class State by the proletarian State, which is finally to 'wither away' of itself. But there is no such supersession in the system associated with the groups in India. In India it is not as if sacerdotalism has to be succeeded by Feudalism, and this latter by capitalism, and that finally by proletarianism. For, all these in India are co-efficient factors which are not only not irreconcilable but "are indispensable to each other, and deliberately and insistently endeavour to balance itself by

various scientific devices which seem to have effected their purpose, on the whole, through the leadership of men of wisdom."

Foreign conquests necessarily destroyed the hold of the ancient scheme on Society. Whether you go to the Fascist State or even to the Russian Soviets, you will find the four classes of people,—the men of wisdom, the men of valour, the men of wealth, and the men of service,—organising a State and class collaboration. Such a State is not merely a possessing organisation, not merely a constituent force, but the supreme expression of all forms of national life,—a synthesis of nationalism, comprising the four types of human beings representing the four vocational sections duly trained, balanced, and utilised, so as to civilise State and Society and ensure the greatest general well-being. The four sections are the limbs of an organic body, not separable into individual factors. They are the head, arms, trunk, and legs of the body politic. As between them, it is not a question of equality but of equitability. It is such a form of society which eliminated class-war by a balancing of the vocational interests. Wisdom and valour, capital and labour, representing the four *varnas* are complementary, not antagonistic.

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## CHAPTER XI

### VICIOUS CIRCLES AND HOW TO BREAK THEM

In the preceding chapters an attempt has been made to show how the continued influences of foreign rule have served to upset the very framework and foundations of Indian civilization. Our task to-day is like unto that of one who has a mansion which has been 'earthquaked' and therefore become not merely uninhabitable but unapproachable. We have all seen many such mansions on the banks of the Ganges in Patna and other parts of Behar. Nearer home most people would have seen how when an imp in the streets throws a stone at a pane of glass of a municipal lantern a stellate fracture results and there is known cement that can join the pieces together, although they can still be held in juxtaposition by means of a fine artistic wooden frame. To-day Indian civilization and society have suffered this stellate fracture pane and frame and the task of the Nation-builder is to piece together the broken fragments by the giant cement of a resuscitated nationalism.

It is our own ambition to develop this nationalism along lines that lead to an all-round self-realisation. The tendency of the nations, however, in the twentieth century is to be strong rather than full and

self-complete. It is thus that cities have come into existence much to the detriment of villages. Indeed one wag has directed civilization as city-i-zation a process which has absorbed all energies, resources and talents to the development of the comforts and conveniences, the enjoyments and recreations of cities. And the villages have become the cindrellas of cities, their sole function being to provide the cities with sustenance, exalt the citizens thereof by the aid of their votes to places of power and authority which would only react against the voters themselves and consolidate their slavery. This new thralldom of the village to the city, — a city that destroys the skill, employment, and sustenance of the village by the free and unfettered impost and hawking of foreign goods of every description is the saddest feature of the modern civilization from which Gandhism seeks to emancipate the country. In place of the abject and servile existence which European civilization hath imposed upon our villages, Gandhism aims at restoring village leadership in politics, in economics and in ethics indeed briefly speaking, in national life so that society which God hath made into one corporate whole may not be rent asunder into two sharply contrasted sections of master and slave, employer and employed creditor and debtor capitalist and coolie, yea, briefly into light and darkness.

Western civilization has become a series of vicious circles, a whole process of courting evils and finding remedies. Quick moving vehicles are invented and

clouds of dust and evergrowing accidents follow. The vehicle is typical of European civilization in that the man at the steering wheel has a happy time of it'' what matters it if the men behind are buried in dust and the men before are knocked down by the wheels. To allay dust roads are tarred, to find the extra expense, taxes multiply, to find the extra taxes, corruption grows. That is one circle. Another circle in the same sphere is that to lessen accidents quick speed roads are separately constructed, and separate roads require underground and overground passages—which require money, more money, more taxes, corruption, oppression and starvation, crime and suffering, drink, more crime, jails, more national expenditure demanding more public revenues. One other vicious circle relating to quick movement and haste is the raising of dust on the road. To allay the dust to water the roads or preferably tar them. Tarred roads cost several times more expenditure than metalled roads. This again is an addition to the increasing rates i. e. municipal taxes become intolerably expensive. Oh—the pathos of it all.

Or take another vicious circle;—money has become the magic power of society. But all nations have not the same parity and therefore exchange rules the world's economics. Britain now goes off the Gold standard. Exchange weakens. It went down so low ac. 3.50 or 60 cents and for that reason had lost in 1932—Feb. £. 13,500,000 in repaying that year's foreign debts. Thus when exchange weakens exports

rise but debts increase, therefore exchange is made to rise and British exports to America fall, for America has to pay more in dollars for the same sterling value Britain's export trade is disorganized. Therefore disown the debts first by making symbolic payments and then by 'turning the Board.'

Let us take a third circle. Gold, apart from being a fiduciary reserve of currency notes is of value, as the means of balancing international trade America and France accumulate the gold, of and owing to the fact that most nations have gone off the gold standard, they become formidable competitors to the American foreign trade. America's exports have declined and therefore she has to pay for her imports in gold and thus the accumulation of gold carries with it the reasons for its own exhaustion

Take a fourth circle Britain has gone off the gold standard. She has balanced her trade and her budget doubtless and attained a show of internal prosperity and her currency stood high in the markets of the world, but a new danger has arisen. The currency was linked to nothing and that left it open to the operation of speculators in the money market who could give it false values—whether high or lower. It was enough to these people that did not link their currency to gold that their currency merely represented so much buying power over goods or securities or foreign exchanges or aught else.

Another vicious circle relating to lowering of exchange and increase of exports was that what one nation did others imitated forthwith. If there is a tank with water at a high unget-at-able level, a clever man bores a hole into the bund and draws the water into his yard. Next day it is discovered that every other person in the village has done likewise and tank that should have served the village all the year round is emptied in a week !

Likewise, the Bank rate has become a veritable bugbear in the way of smooth business and has given rise to a series of vicious circles. It is lowered, money becomes available, industries prosper but deposits are depleted by investors foreign as well as local. The glut has readily given place to want and bank rate rises in order to restrict demand. National debt falls due for a payment and bank rate is lowered below that of paper with the result that paper and securities are renewed at a lowered rate of interest percent. Once that is done bank rate is raised. England balances her budget by raising taxes which have reached the limit. There is a clamour for their reduction. The Finance minister must reduce them but does not know how to balance the budget. If sterling toes too low, it is a sign of collapse and if it goes too high, it is a sign of a feverish condition that may lead to delirium and in either case whether collapse or delirium death ensues.

Then a word about Tariffs. To protect your industries you raise tariffs but observe Imperial Preference and enter into the Ottawa agreement. England wants to buy all her wheat from dominions. Other countries like Russia hitherto supplying wheat cannot sell their produce the price of which goes down resulting in a corresponding decline in the purchasing power of the people of those countries, who were formerly buying machinery of Britain. Thus Imperial preference lands Britain in the decline of her exports. England gets £ 23,000,000 worth of butter from within the Empire and £ 24,000,000 from outside (70 crores of rupees in all). If she cannot buy butter from Belgium and Holland, she cannot sell goods to the Netherlands and is badly hit in her export trade. Thus whether the purchasing power of *individuals* goes down owing to the low prices of indigenous produce or products, or of *countries*, owing to the failure of barter—and absence of gold and international trade is in the ultimate analysis only barter—the conclusion is irresistible that the more you devise means, the worse is your failure. Every remedy makes the disease worse for cause and effect move in a vicious circle.

The wars greatly complicate the situations arising under the modern Industrial conditions which are sufficiently complex in themselves. Great Britain's war loan liabilities to the United States of America amount to £ 2,282,000,000 payable during a space of 62 years. German Reparation amounted to £ 6,576,000,000 payable

over a period of 58 years. Germany paid her dues in kind for some years both to England and France and while France ceased to import from Great Britain her usual pre-war quota of machinery and implements, England herself got for her supplies from abroad and had no need for her workshops to run. Unemployment was thus the doom of the victor nations, while vanquished Germany found her workshops busy day and night with work. *Vanquished* Germany thus took Victor Britain and France captive and in England the unemployment figures mounted up to eleven million soon after the war. To-day they stand at 1½ million. In Germany there was no unemployment. But how and where did Germany find her working capital. Her creditors had to supply her the same. Else the workshops would not run, for Germany had plenty of brawn and muscle on the bodies of the Germans but not a mark in her coffers. England and France borrowed freely from America and advanced to Germany. After a stage Hitler appeared on the scene Germany refused payments to England and France and France suspends payments in turn to the U. S. A. England kept up for a while a show of symbolical payments and presently followed the example of France. The result is that the U. S. A. found herself saddled with a debt of £2,000,000,000 to her own people.

These facts and other facts relating to the loss of markets by the European Industrial nations in the Orient, clearly prove that the age of exploitation is

gone,—gone no more to return. The parasitic life of the West on the East has well nigh reached its end. Europe must hereafter supply the host and the smaller nationalities are being victimized. England, France, Italy, and Germany and Russia are engaged in planning mutual destruction in groups on the battle ground of Spain in the West or Czechoslovakia in the centre. In the East Japan and China are engaged in a titanic struggle. India is quietly re-building her national edifice and would gladly have neither sky scrapers nor squalid huts.

To achieve this result we take our stand neither on the theory of Social contract which has introduced the rule of majorities,—of hands, not heads much less hearts, nor upon the legal status given to conflicts among the divisions of the human family into classes and groups. With the debris of a couple of centuries she has no need for Imperialism or exploitation. Hers shall be a self-contained and self-complete civilization. Extreme inequality is always in conflict with the noblest ideals of humanity and when once India is self complete, she cannot bear to see tall oaks and short poppies. We cannot endorse the pathetic proposition that a "view is right because it is held by many,—whatever their standard of conduct or life," and must recognize and value the "cumulative experience of mankind that the true and the Good are independent and above the choice or preferences of individuals whatever their number." Not that we abhor or suspect

democracy but that democracy itself has become a mere counterfeit of its original self—a kind of verbal veil to hide the self-seeking machinations of capitalists, plutocrats and adventurers. To this extent it must be purged and purged it can be only by eternal vigilance in the application of Truth and Non-violence. Under such Vigilance people will no longer be lulled into a sense of false security engendered by the mellifluous but soporific expression—democracy. We shall no longer be calling upon people to struggle for their rights, we shall be pressing people to do towards their neighbours under their duties for Truth and Nonviolence prescribe not merely the Rights of Man but his Duties as well, nay, to vary the language, we interpret every right as only a duty objectified and every duty only as a right subjectified. In the new scheme of life *Rights and Duties* shall become one and inseparable so that the lamb and the lion shall drink of the same pond and the hawk and the dove shall nestle together in the same nest.

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# **Socialism and Gandhism**

## **PART II**



## CHAPTER XII

### CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME EXPLAINED

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**Three beams on which Gandhiji has reared  
the edifice of freedom.**

On the eve of the celebrations of the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi once again, it behoves us to review the progress of events during the past half a century and the circumstances that have led to the leadership of a saint in politics. The Congress has passed through various stages and while it is easy for posterity to declaim against the methods employed by their forbears it must nevertheless, be recognised that the discoveries of a latter era are but the result of the evolution of ideas and thoughts which have gained ground in the earlier decades of the history of a movement. Amongst the triumphs of the Congress that must be noted and taken credit for, especially by India is one that will shine forever as an example to mankind, one too that must be mentioned as the victory of non-violence over violence, in the arbitrament of national disputes in the Indian world.

Here in India, a mighty Oriental nation of ancient repute, stands arrayed against a puny modern island nation which, however by the force of its arms, by its

adventurous spirit, by its diplomacy, by the geographical pressure of and, by the historical force of circumstances and by sheer struggle for existence has managed to establish an empire on which it is said "the sun never sets". But humourously it has been said too that the sun never sets over the British Empire because the sun in his broad effulgence must keep watch over the Britishers in the various parts of the world. In this historic struggle between Britain and India the Indians have secured a triumph which is moral, political and economic all in one. Indeed, in India for the first time the difference between politics as such and economics and ethics has been wiped out and life itself has become a many faceted manifestation of a divine essence and these various departments are only the facets of that many sided life.

### LOVE OF MAN.

How is this miracle achieved in India? To whose exertions does this ancient country owe this victory in the very midst of her subjection and slavery? How has it happened that politics has been elevated to the level of a religion, a culture, a code of ethics from the vulgar levels of the nineteenth century? The question was answered long ago not by Indians, partial to Mahatma Gandhi's new cult of truth and non-violence, but by a Westerner Prof. Gilbert Murray in the following words :

“Be careful in dealing with a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasures, nothing for comfort, or praise or promotion, but is simply determined to do what he believes to be right. He is a dangerous and uncomfortable enemy because his body which you can always conquer gives you so little purchase over his soul”.

It is by the supremacy of the soul over the body duly established by various processes of bodily mortification that Gandhiji has succeeded in inculcating this principle in India and infusing it into the larger political life of the country. Patriotism has been divested of its dross and purified and elevated into the love of man. Indian nationalism itself has been reconciled to the larger ideal of universal brotherhood. No human issue can be regarded as being outside the sphere of religion or ethics, whatever you may call it. For the days are long gone by, when religions can be defined as the strings of dogmas or mere methods of worship for at the root of all religion lies that spirit of sacrifice and dedication to the service of fellowmen which alone makes all religions sacred and more so the religion of politics.

### **Truth and Non-Violence.**

Thus it is that the Congress creed has come to be altered from a long rigmarole of administrative and diplomatic evasions or assertions to a straight declaration of the claims of India for Swaraj to be achieved by

peaceful and legitimate means. Gandhiji has striven to substitute the words "truthful and non-violent", for 'peace' to him means 'nonviolence' and 'legitimacy' 'truthfulness'. Untruth has always gained cheaper victories and earlier victories over truth and as Mrs. Besant always said "a lie went 6 months in advance of the truth". It would not have been possible for a country like India with its 35 crores of population covering a wide range of civilization and culture or want of them, if you please, to awaken itself to its own sense of rights and duties, had it not been for the permeation of the whole people with this new spirit of truth and non-violence. The successes, therefore that have attended the Congress must be measured not with the measure-rod of political achievement in the country but with the somewhat impalpable and intangible standards of judgment by which alone we can measure the determination of a whole nation to a sense of its slavery and equally to a sense of the urgency of its emancipation.

In the past the Congress has made various kinds of efforts in order to achieve this emancipation. There was the era of reforms; there was also the era of protests, there was the era of Home Rule, of self-government on colonial lines and of Swaraj within the Empire if possible and without the empire if necessary and finally an unequivocal declaration that India's object is "complete independence" or "Purna Swaraj". For a declaration like this to be made possible in an era

when empires have been over-thrown and kings have been assassinated in Europe, where politics has tended to become not only factious in outlook, but also bitter in spirit it required not merely the eloquence or the strategy of a statesman, but the unassailable purity of ideal and character, reached and practised alike by a saint, philosopher and full-blown man.

The cult of non-violence is yet to be appreciated by the outside nations of the world and lived up to in India by the large mass of people who have come under the influence of Western civilization and western ideals of politics, and is essentially based upon the innate goodness of man without which the well-being of the world would be jeopardised every moment and any moment. It therefore depends for its recognition and its popularity upon the unquestioned, truth that in this world the duty of man is not to conquer the enemy but to convert him. It depends further upon the larger fact that in this world duties play as much a part as rights and there is no conception of rights possible which does not carry with it at the same time as implicit in itself, a sense of duties as well. When once people recognise that rights carry with them duties, what is called a duty is also readily recognised as the right of your neighbour viewed from your standpoint. Based upon this essential doctrine has been reconstructed the philosophy of Indian Swaraj so that the conclusion has become irresistible that in the asking for complete independence, we are seeking to throw off the

slavery of one nation to another which implies equally that each individual should throw off the slavery of himself or herself to his or her neighbour. When individuals throw off their yoke, equally will villagers throw off theirs and each village becomes self-contained and with such freedom assured for groups of individuals whom we call society.

### **Purifying Modern Politics.**

Society becomes at once rid of the two great demons of fear and greed which have led to all the evils in the world. Fear possesses a person because his ambitions may not be realised. It is because a man fears his neighbours that he becomes greedy. Thus greed leads to fear and fear feeds greed. When the two are cast off, when man is made to feel that his neighbour's good is his own good, his neighbour's health conduces to his own health, his neighbour's prosperity will make for his own well-being and that men are not independent of each other but are merely dependent upon one another, then it is that a desire for mutual welfare and the perpetual old prayer of the Hindu that the whole world should rest in peace and happiness will become the key to the understanding of Satyagraha. It is thus that the Congress has under the spirit of non-violence pressed for the resuscitation of the village industries and crafts, the recovery of a self-sufficient village life and the purification of our modern politics.

Gandhiji has thus tried to rehabilitate India on the economic, on the social and on the ethical plane at

the same time. After a few years of the inauguration of the movement, Khaddar became the keystone of Indian Swaraj and to-day when Congress Ministers are holding the reigns of Government in their hands, Khaddar has become not the badge of a seditious body, but the hallmark of renascent nationalism. Gandhiji had made several fasts to achieve this result. But he chose to dedicate his life itself and proclaimed a fast unto death in order to achieve his next reform, viz, the effacement of untouchability. After achieving these two great miracles in his life, we knew that he would address himself to the third great reform, namely the abolition of drink; but this it has been given to him to achieve by much simpler means than we had apprehended. Khaddar, on the economic plane, removal of untouchability on the social and the abolition of drink on the moral—these three are the beams on which this architect of non-violence has reared the edifice of Swaraj.

### **Technique of Non-violence.**

People often ask whether the technique of non-violence is not far too complicated for the common man to practise and we have to answer this question. The technique of religion itself and the proof of existence of the Divine Being are far too complicated to be grasped by the man in the street, yet they constitute the dynamic source of inspiration and incentive to effort by all men who carry out their manifold duties

in this world in a spirit not merely of orderliness but also of brotherhood. Satyagraha is a simple process when once the basic principle underlying it is grasped. Indeed, the principles upon which all religions have been founded in the past have been incredibly simple, yet the most complex philosophies have been woven round them, but the complexity of the philosophy has never prevented the simplicity of the principle from permeating the life of whole nations and of life of the victories of the religions based thereon.

We have seen in our own day how the crude beginnings of Satyagraha took the shape of passive resistance at first, which was a movement of pride and bitterness, not without a tinge of hatred and violence. It developed into Non-Co-operation with an element in it of anger and perhaps of vengeance, but soon it developed into civil disobedience and it took enormous effort for Gandhiji to make people understand that non-violence was the true inspiring principle of this aspect of the movement. When people began to realise that the adjective was as important as the noun it was then that Satyagraha was inaugurated; so that non-violence became not merely a negative factor but a positive force manifesting itself as 'that love which does not burn others but burns itself to death.'

Satyagraha is essentially Indian in origin as well as in outlook. From time to time the ancient sages had adopted the simple device of sticking to truth and non-violence and braving the attacks delivered against them

in an effectual manner by Kings and Warriors. All that is required for its adoption as a practical weapon is that the Satyagrahi must consider himself a seeker after truth and therefore must give up the fear of man, of government, of society, of poverty and of death. With the aid of such a "Sadhana" therefore a true spirit of self-sacrifice and of humility and through them both, of courage is engendered in the votaries thereof. And politics which has been charged with this new principle becomes at once sublimated and spiritualised. It is thus after years of incarceration the Kakori prisoners and the Andaman detenues have all proclaimed their spontaneous recognition of the potency of non-violence and their abandonment of their terrorist principles. A new era has begun—not for India alone but for the whole world and it is our hope that in the midst of wars and rumours of wars, we may yet live to see the day in our own time when disputes—national and international—shall be settled by the arbitrament of love and peace, not hatred and war.

### **Rehabilitating the dying cottage industries Khaddar—Prince among village crafts.**

The second day of Gandhi week celebrations may appropriately be devoted to Khaddar, as Khaddar, Prohibition and removal of untouchability form the three beams on which the edifice of Swaraj is being constructed. We need not now go into the elements of the

theory on which the reconstruction of national life, through village industries and Khaddar, the prince amongst them has been planned and worked out during the past fifteen years

People however, do not know the elementary fact that once this country clothed itself exclusively with hand-spun and hand-woven cloth. They do not realise that the East India Company had come into this country in order to gather cloth manufactured in the coastal towns where they had started factories which meant depots or godowns as we now call them because there were no engines or factories at that time. There was no steam-power in the year 1632. All the cloth used to be gathered and stored in these depots and taken to England for profitable trade. They derived huge profits amounting to 300 % over the cloth taken from this country to England and the cloth which at one time used to be spread upon the floor of rich houses in England soon came to adorn the loins of the queens and people mocked at the trading company which had thus brought down the purchase of national goods in England. Later on when Moorshadabad silk began to invade English society and when the English squires and knights and barons used to dress themselves in silk suits, Daniel Defoe twitted them saying that they were in their own country made after Moorshadabad silks not knowing how adversely that was affecting the trade of England, their own mother country.

### **Sale of Indian Goods Penalised.**

It is well-known that in the year 1700 a Law was passed penalising every Englishman who wore Indian silk by fining him £ 5. In 1735 a law was passed penalising every Englishman who sold Indian silk by fining him £ 25. Nay, they went further in England and passed a law that anybody who drapped the corps in England in a shroud made of material other than wool should be fined £ 5. They imposed tariff duties in order to counteract the import of Indian silk into England.

Thus they protected their own country from the invasion of foreign cloth and in the meantime the steam-engine was invented and power was applied to the weaving loom as well as spinning jenny. That achieved results far more potent and far more marvellous than any achieved by the tariff-policy of Government.

Manufacture of cotton cloth began to increase in England for mills make cloth not by hundreds but by bales. They are monsters whose food must run into hundred-weights and tons, not in pounds and tolas merely. So, for the first time cloth began to be imported into India. In the year 1803 when there was only 3 lakhs worth of cloth, in 1829 it was 29 lakhs worth of cloth while in 1929 it was 66 crores of rupees worth of cloth and 6 crores worth of yarn. That is how India has become a happy market for Lancashire. And British Empire in India meant not the Empire established by law and order, by the land

revenue system or by a system of university education or by courts, colleges and councils or by the titled aristocracy, but by Lancashire and its power looms.

### **Commercial Conquest of India**

The conquest of India by England is a many-sided one, not merely territorial but cultural and commercial. The commercial conquest of India is perhaps the most vital gain to England because in England they get only 5 weeks' food from within their borders of the United Kingdom. The food required by the nation in the remaining 47 weeks has to be obtained from abroad. For this purpose they have to pay, and as payment in gold and silver for an unlimited length of time is an impossibility, they must pay only in kind. In fact, international trade is a sort of barter on a large scale on which goods pay for goods i. e., in which exports pay for imports. Thus it is not merely to the interests of Britain but it is a vital necessity for Britain to make India buy English goods. Otherwise, there would be starvation because food materials cannot be imported into England. This is the secret of the commercial conquest of England in India.

We realised the truth of this in a way in the year 1905 when as a protest against the partition of Bengal we resolved to use Swadeshi goods. And the range of goods covered at that time was practically confined to cloth, soaps, candles and enamel-ware. Later on, when

the cult of boycott began to be in the ascendant; the moderate school of politicians tried to suppress the excitement in the country, and instead of adopting boycott, supported Swadeshi, recommending the use of goods in this country "even at sacrifice." That was Ghokle's position in 1908 but even at that time, the people were called on to make a sacrifice. Why? Because Government would not be supporting this industry and the sacrifices consisted in asking the people to put up with inferior cloth at superior rates coarser fabrics at dearer prices

This principle therefore of giving a national non-official bounty to cloth lay embedded even in the resolutions of the Moderates of the Congress which held sway from 1908 to 1915. In the Home Rule movement it is also Swadeshi that held the field. But when Gandhiji appeared on the scene the reign of Swadeshi was consolidated and the sacrifices demanded were intensified. The people were asked not merely to wear hand-woven cloth as in the days of the partition of Bengal and in the Home Rule agitation but also hand-spun hand-woven cloth. Government themselves have never been unmindful of the requirements of supporting both materially the handloom weaver in India. And in recent years handsome grants have been made to the tune of 15 lakhs a year by the Central Government for supporting and consolidating the hand weaving industry.

### Support to Khadi

But when the same hand weaver, is asked to weave hand-spun yarn what happens ? The yarn, the cloth, the weaver, the organiser, and the politics that supported such a cult have become seditious. Fortunately, those days have passed by and we are living in an age when the ministers themselves are wearing the very khaddar cloth and exhort huge audiences in public to wear similar cloth and support the poor so that the course of wealth may flow not from the village to town and from town to the city and from the city to abroad but from the city to the town and from the town to the village, and in the village to the poor widow who lost her husband, to the poor old blind woman who has lost her sons and to the poor sister-in-law whose brother-in-law would not maintain her.

People have asked derisively whether the earning of one anna is worth while pursuing, when for fetching a taxi in the High Court an Advocate would pay four annas to an errand boy. Quite so. Errand boys earn good money but High Courts are not in every village. They are only to be found in five or six cities. In this country which has 750 thousand villages and 2,800 towns what should happen to all the people living therein if you would take count of only a few errand boys that earn 4 annas a day for fetching taxi in cities where there are High Courts ? Do we not know that the average income of an Indian is Rs. 23 according to

our calculations and Rs. 48 according to the calculations of a reactionary Viceroy like Lord Curzon ? And his estimates come to Rs. 4 a month or 2 annas a day. If that is so, shall we lose anything by adding one anna to those two annas and making that anna available to those who do not leave the privacy of their homes and who can labour at their own leisure more as a pass-time than as a task, And recently Mahatma Gandhi has urged the increase of the spinning wage from 1 to 2 or even 3 annas. He has stated that the spinning wage should not be less than 8 annas a day of 8 hours spinning and one hour cording. And it is the one urgent practical consideration presented to him by his coadjutors that made the reduction from 8 annas to 2, 3, 4 annas possible.

### **Labour and Wealth**

These rates are in force in various parts of the Presidency and those who have been labouring in the field of Khaddar have been virtually forced to adopt these rates at the risk of public criticism that the prices of Khaddar already too high are rising higher still Yet they are rising. The rich man is to make a sacrifice in order to maintain the poor. The wealth of the richman is built up by the labour of the poor and even from the standpoint of the interests of the wealthy, the labourer should be worthy of his hire and the hire paid to the labourer should be worthy of his labour. If labour builds up wealth, it is just as well that labour

should be strong and capable in order to build up more wealth in the wealthy classes. Even from such a standpoint anybody could not object to the rising of the spinning wage. Thus viewed from the standpoint of economics, of ethics or of politics, Khaddar has no reason to be ashamed of the earnestness and attention devoted to it during the past several years.

One point needs to be emphasised just at this juncture. Like the waves of the seas that have their ebb and flow, even so the political waves have their rise and fall and when we witness the rise, the political activity also appears to gain extra strength and importance. Now the Ministers of the Congress Party have come into office. It looks as though there is a general wave of enthusiasm in favour of Khaddar; and various mushroom institutions are fast springing up in order to cope with the requirements of the public which are bound to increase.

### **Definition of Khaddar.**

The All India Spinners' Association which is the accredited body of the Congress for the manufacture and distribution of Khaddar has laid down certain rules as fundamental to the development of this industry and has virtually defined Khaddar not only as cloth manufactured on the handloom with handspun yarn but also as cloth in the manufacture of which every artisan, be he a corder, spinner, weaver, printer, dyer or bleacher, receives his proper wage. Therefore whatever may be

the legal definition of Khaddar, the political definition which is also the economic definition is that Khaddar is such cloth as has been manufactured by artisan receiving a wage recognised or prescribed by the A. I. S. A. That is why we exhort the public to buy only cloth from the certified shops. There is a terrible temptation for people to put on the market all kinds of cloth. The A. I. S. A. has therefore been put to extra trouble in having to control certified production and distribution of Khaddar in such complicated conditions. The Government's requirements are also fast growing; and Khaddar that is being manufactured to-day by the certified institutions or by the A. I. S. A. is not enough to supply a single government with its variety of requirements, if only Government chose to ask for Khaddar for the use of its hospitals, its police and its staff whose uniforms are supplied by them. Under these circumstances, there is extra anxiety on the part of the A. I. S. A. to see to it that all Khaddar manufactured is pure and helps poor producers to earn a living wage

It has come to our knowledge authoritatively that when District Boards and Municipalities and Corporations are asking for Khaddar, they are receiving estimates from uncertified bodies as well. This must be put an end to. Congress Presidents of District Boards doubtless know that such uncertified institutions should not be patronised or even countenanced and that therefore it is wrong on their part to ask for

or entertain estimates of that sort from such parties. We therefore sent forth this appeal to all the officers concerned not to receive Khaddar from such uncertified bodies.

It is too late, at this stage, to indulge ourselves in singing the praises of Khaddar. Khaddar has withstood the buffets of time and circumstance. It has survived the onslaughts of public criticism. It has seen the days of derision and ridicule which are the lot of all progressive movements in the earlier years of their inception. It has also seen the days of apathy and indifference. It is now passing through a kind of unwilling homage paid to it under the stress of the political triumphs achieved by the Congress in the reformed Government of the day. The time may still come when people may spontaneously realise that their hearts must flow out to the village for the relief of the poor, when the rich must realise that all the surplus wealth they have is trust for the happiness of the poor, and that it is the right of the poor to have food and raiment and housing, even as it is the duty of the rich to provide these amenities of life for their poor brethren.

### **Master of his creation.**

Khaddar maintains the sanctity of the home, keeps the family together and makes the products of crafts to the property of the craftsman which he can

use, stock, sell, mortgage or deal with, in any manner he likes.

He is the creator, and he is the master of his own creation. He lives in his home; but his home is not only manufactory but is also his school in which his children learn the hereditary craft at the lap of his father and mother. Every member of the family participates in one process or other connected with the craft and there is no such thing as a workman doing a prescribed piece of disjointed, unconnected, mechanical lifeless work in a factory and receiving a wage. The craftsman is his own master, takes leave whenever he requires it. He need not apply to others. Is it a marriage, a death, some illness or merely an indisposition, he will not be at the mercy of a distant unthinking, unsympathetic, unperceiving master bent upon making money; he lives and works and moves as he likes having in his own hands the control of his time.

The supremacy of cottage industries as forming the basis of Indian civilisation cannot be challenged in the twentieth century. When from Japan to Egypt through China, Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Persia, Afghanistan, Mesopotamia, a universal boycott of the Western goods is being strenuously pursued and when also each nation wants to have its trade balanced and make the exports pay for the imports and thus make the country self-contained altogether; it is obvious that no one can question the supreme importance of the

rehabilitating of the dead and the dying industries of the villages in India and Khaddar being the foremost among them, it does not need any extraordinary emphasis, at this stage, to stress its vital importance. We only repeat this appeal, once a year, in particular during the celebrations of the Gandhi Week to the people at large and tell them that their destiny is in their own hands.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### DRINK ONE OF THE SEVEN DEVILS OF THE WORLD

Drink is one of the seven Devils of the world. Crores of the poorer folk as well as thousands of the rich have become victims to this dire evil and are ruining their health, their wealth, and their happiness in life. Drink is not objectionable in the eyes of the civilised West, though drunkenness is taken exception to. But in our country no one condones drink, it does not matter to what class of society he may belong. Even the classes given to drink by ancient customs, dare not declare their weakness that way consistently with their respectability. But as a result of contact with the west, certain new classes of people, notably a few amongst the richer sections of society have become accustomed to drink in general and to the use of foreign drinks in particular. Not that there was no drink in our country in ancient days,—indeed instances do occur in the epics of people taking intoxicants and this is evident from the verse in Bhagavatgeeta according to which Sukracharya prohibited the use of all drinks. He declared that “those who are given to drink are sinners”.

#### Spells Ruin.

The population of this country is 35 crores; of them the Hindus are 24 crores, while the Muslims are

8 crores in number. Amongst the Hindus there are about 4 crores of so-called "Untouchables" and 80 to 90 per cent of the male population of the unfortunate class are pining away under the devastating influence of drink. Besides this, there are certain classes of people who are labourers or roving mendicants who spend the bulk of their earnings upon drink. And it is much to be regretted that even amongst the higher classes of agriculturists, there are certain sections which under the influence of drink have lost their reputation, position in society, character and personal and family happiness. After the advent of the British into this country this indulgence in liquor has become an open vice and trade therein has been publicly licensed under the authority of the state. Yea, for a long time drink has actually become one of the chief sources of revenue to Government. To license a declared sin like drink which is on a par with crimes such as theft and gambling under the sign manual as it were of the authorities is a matter for shame and sorrow. It is not less heinous on the part of the state to grant a licence to carry on trade in liquor which is subversive of society, than to high way robbery or secre-brothels. But the unfortunate position is that in the eye of our rulers, neither drink nor gambling is to be looked down upon in the same manner and to the same extent as they are in our own country according to its ancient tradition.

In Muslim society equally with Hindu, the founders of religion and the priests have preached in an

unequivocal manner against this evil of drink. It is regrettable that in Muslim society also drink has penetrated far and wide, as in Hindu society. And to uproot this mighty evil those who care for the well being of society, have it as a duty laid upon them to labour strenuously and incessantly, not only by the moral law of religion but also by the commands of the Congress.

### 17 Crores Revenue

Fancy ! a Government, making over the whole of British India, a sum of Rs. 17 crores by way of revenue derived from this abnoxious evil out of the revenues of the Madras Government aggregating to 16 crores, a fourth is derived from Abkari. Is it not an irony of fate and even a tragedy that while the poor are starving under the influence of drink to which their men are addicted, the rich should be making merry over the education that they are receiving with the aid of this very revenue derived from the blood of the poor? Is it not an instance of robbing Peter to pay Paul or killing crows to feed eagles?

Whole families skilled in the arts and crafts of life have under the influence of drink become deprived of their cunning and capacity. The dexterity of those given to drink declines under the growing influence of drink, and their very blood becomes degenerated, allowing a whole category of diseases to thrive on them. It is well known how those who are given to drink are

wanting in the capacity of resistance to disease and fall an easy prey to their destructive effects. Drink destroys the power of judgement and makes its victims yield to the temptations that draw them into crimes of various sorts.

By controlling drink the poverty of the labouring classes can straightway be reduced, by a half. Their health and culture could progress. Crime in the country would decline a good deal leading to a corresponding decline in the expenditure of the state in having to detect or prevent it. Money is saved and this in turn fosters trade; promotes production and develops the creative energy in the nation.

### OUR DUTY

For the past 17 years under the auspices of the congress, Mahatma Gandhi has been propagating this cult of abstinence and the Congress Ministry which has come into power in our presidency has undertaken to implement the programme which they have placed before the public, for the past decade and a half. A sudden stoppage of drink all over the Presidency at the same time would cut off the income of the Province by 4 crores and embarras the finances of the Government. Accordingly the Congress Ministry has inaugurated this reform as a first step in the district of Salem. Let it be remembered that it is only a first step and not an experiment, and the subsequent steps will be adopted in the course of 3 years in the rest of the Presidency. For

it is necessary to balance the budget and this can be done only by reducing all possible avoidable expenditure elsewhere and increasing all possible additional sources of revenue,—processes which require careful examination of the affairs of the State and well considered innovations in them.

Obviously then, it is our duty to carry on propaganda in the remaining districts as part of the celebrations of Gandhiji's Birthday in order to prepare the country for the coming reform on the one hand and assist the State in carrying it successfully on the financial as well as on the moral side on the other.

### **The Case of Bengal.**

When the Government themselves have undertaken this programme of prohibition it will be seen that the objections and obstacles to it which are usually cited by those who doubt the wisdom of the reform, will not so much raise their head. The one objection that has been raised is that when people are not allowed to drink openly a lot of illicit distillation and manufacture is bound to come into being. But this is not correct because what makes the real difference is the auspices under which the programme of Reform is sought to be implemented. In Bengal where the Government itself is ill-disposed to drink, it is said that the revenue per capita derived from drink is not a fourth or a fifth of the revenue per capita derived in some of the major Provinces. Surely Bengal is a much bigger

Province and has a much larger population than the other major Provinces in India, yet the fact remains that the revenue per capita derived from drink is much less. Why? Because in Bengal the Government have always discouraged drink and the temperate habits prevalent in the rural population of Bengal has caused the Drink Revenue to go down so low, much lower than in Bihar or Madras or Bombay. In fact in Bengal the bulk of the toddy drawn from the date trees is used for the manufacture of sugar.

### **Causes analysed.**

It would be interesting to study in this connection a few statistics relating to the causes of drink amongst the poorer classes. Some statistics have been prepared from amongst the patients in a hospital in New York. These reveal the fact that they have taken to drink for various reasons. For social reasons 52·5 percent have taken to drink, 13 per cent on account of domestic troubles, for medical reasons 9·3 per cent, professionally 7 per cent, being taught by elders 7 per cent, on account of unemployment 5 per cent, for sporting reasons 1·2 per cent and 5 per cent of the people have not been able to account for the habits that they have contracted.

### **Cycle of Ruin.**

Take again the social repercussions of drink. Divorces are largely traced to domestic quarrels, arising

from drink. Between the years 1887-1906, it is said that in America 1,84,568 marriages ended in divorces and 45 per cent of these were occasioned by reason of drink. In cities we often hear of brothels and 80 per cent of the women that gather in these brothels do so under the influence of drink. In our own country in the N. W. F. P. the average expenditure on drink per capita, we are told is 3 annas 8 pies, in Bombay Rs. 2-1-0 while in the other Provinces the amounts range between these two figures. Or take again the reaction of drink upon the capacity for work. As the result of liquor, the marksman suffers in shooting by the shaking of his hands, the compositor in the printing press finds his fingers unsteady and the sportsman on the athletic field notes that his limbs become nearly frail. People work the whole week and take a holiday on Sunday and drink a good deal on that day. On Monday they are unfit for work. By the way, as medical students we often used to find our doctors in the General Hospital very unsafe on Mondays. The man who can shoot 80 per cent points at the target on a Saturday, can only do 70 per cent on a Monday. A man who can compose 8 sticks on a Saturday, can only do 6 sticks on a Monday. A man who can clear 10 ft. in long jump on a Saturday is able to clear only 8 or 9 ft. on a Monday. The wonder is that from Monday to Tuesday from Tuesday to Wednesday to Thursday, the capacity of all these workers goes on increasing step by step until by Thursday evening they are able to recover their normal attainments and efficiency. On Friday they are perfect

and so are they on Saturday. But on Sunday comes drink and from Monday the decline begins.

Thus goes on the cycle of ruin rapaid until at least the machine breaks down beyond the limits of recovery. It is easy to present the case against drink in a variety of ways.

Judged morally, it is a sin against God Judged socially, it is a blot on civilisation. Judged physically, it is a hindrance to the performance of our daily duties. The wonder is that this civilized Government should have been sedulously fostering this source of revenue for so long.

When drink is given up not only do the people save the 4 crores paid to Government but they would be saving 17 crores of money which represents the value of drink itself in our own province. And when all the 28 districts of our Presidency keep pace with Salem the savings of the people will rise by 21 crores a year and help to replenish the revenues of the State while the expenditure of the State itself would go down materially. People who have thus grown richer would support the State and society in a variety of unforeseen ways, and a new era of prosperity and all round happiness will have begun in 3 years, if only Congressmen assist in this noble work and devote themselves heart and soul to the task of regeneration lying before them, a task-which is twice blessed and even thrice.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### THE EPIC FAST FOR REMOVAL OF UNTOUCHABILITY

The removal of untouchability is not a new idea but its absorption into the political programme as one of the three main constituents of its constructive side is a new feature. Indeed no single item of Gandhiji's programme of constructive reform is a new discovery except the revival of hand-spinning. But it is the assemblage of an economic, a social and an ethical item that makes the programme the discovery of the age. During his whirl-wind tours throughout the country he has been approached to bring relief to the distressed and the distress of different people has been found to be different in character. At one place it was the fallen sister that sought his grace and at another it was the untouchables. At one place it was the helpless families of the drunkard and the debauchee, at another it was the starving children of the destitute. The sight of distress to his right and to his left, to his front and to his back did not fill him with despair or drive him to a philosophy of inaction or penance in forests. But like the man that he is, every inch a man, he set about thinking out and devising measures of relief for the fallen and the untouchables to the starving and the drunken and the debauched. His thoughts and experiences have resulted in a series of remedies and the

evolution of a formula which has been accepted as a composite constructive programme for the nation. This is the genesis of the removal of untouchability.

### THE BACKGROUND.

Over a century ago Raja Rama Mohan Roy had laboured in this cause and the banner that he held aloft has been kept flying by his successors—especially those who have been running the Brahmo Samaj—scores of instances exist in which Harijan girls have been rescued and Harijan boys have been brought up and both have grown up into honest citizens living a happy and healthy life. No great movement springs up all of a sudden without a background and these detached instances occurring here and there in India now and then over a century have added strength to a programme of socio-religious reform initiated earlier by saints like Ramanuja. All these constitute the rich heritage of the present generation and inspiration to a leader like Gandhiji who has evolved a socio-political programme, giving an important place to social and economic uplift of the so called untouchable classes whom he has renamed ' Harijans '.

A remarkable wave has spread over the whole country and what is really of importance is not a catalogue of achievements but the spirit which has permeated the land from Himalayas to Cape Camorin as the result of the new programme of the Congress. The spirit of helpfulness, and the recognition of the

duty of the Savarnas to the Avarnas has covered a wide range of activities. Scholarships for high school students, institutions for vocational training such as shoe-making, tailoring, tanning, carpentry, weaving homeopathy, ayurveda, mat-making, printing, rattan-work, tinning and tinkering, preparatory schools, hostels for students, medical relief centres, medical examination of Harijans and sinking new wells for them, employment of Harijans in factories, commercial firms, shops and homes of caste Hindus and as newspaper vendors and training them as barbers and dhobies for Savarnas, supply of bullocks to Harijan villages and increase of Harijan labourers, wages, library service, akadas and social clubs in Harijan Bastis and distribution of dresses to Harijan children and blankets to adults—these are some of the acts of philanthropy, really duties, undertaken by the great Harijan organisation brought into being by Gandhiji.

Again, there are certain ancient disabilities to which the Harijans are subject. For instance in the Gharwal districts the use of dolls and pallakis is prohibited in Harijan marriage processions. This right for them has been asserted in the High Court of Allahabad. In Central India the sweepers are not permitted by bus drivers to travel in buses, and this right had been secured by the sweepers of Shajapur. How has all this been brought about—not by stray examples of social reformers, not by the exhortations of economists, not by the preachings of founders of religions, but by the

dynamic energy released in a whole nation by the epic fast of a leader who held his life as naught and resolved to fast unto death to prevent the dismemberment of four crores of Harijans from the twenty two crores of their Hindu brethren.

### THE EPIC FAST.

When the political characters that fill the arena to-day will have played their part and disappeared, when the politics of to-day will have settled down in the history of to-morrow, when the very thought of a fifth of India's population being regarded as a submerged class will have become a forgotten tradition of the past, Mahatmaji's fast on the 20th of September shall live in the memory of posterity for centuries onwards as an epic event that changed the whole face of Indian struggle for national self-emancipation. That fast was directed against the political exploitation of a social evil, by creating a perpetual bar sinter between a so-called minority and a so-called majority by putting asunder those whom God hath really united in one vast Hindu community. The separation of the Harijans as a political group was doubtless the next logical step in the process of the application of the doctrine of "Devide et impera" which has separated first the Mussalmans from the Hindus, then the Sikhs and then the Harijans. This act of political trickery moved the whole being of Mahatmaji who would not allow the untouchables to be

classified as a separate class. 'For' said he, 'Sikhs may remain as such in perpetuity, so may Moslems remain in perpetuity. I would far rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived.' Elsewhere in that famous speech in the Second Round Table Conference, he said, "I will not sell the vital interest of the untouchables even for the sake of winning the freedom of India."

Mahatmaji's fast was undertaken with a full faith in the cause, in the Hindu community and in human nature itself, and faith even in the official world. A fast so pure in origin, so comprehensive in purpose, so exalted in motive was bound to be convincing, converting and conquering all round. How else should we account for the magnificent report of the Harijan Seva Sangh for the year ending 1936 in which out of a total of four lakhs spent in all the Provinces, in the presidency of Madras alone Rs. 1,08,000 was spent? There are 27 provincial boards and over 200 district committees functioning under the Central organisation.

Every where we hear of Harijan conferences, religious education amongst Harijans and Harijan Bhajani Parties in Mandirs, Vedic rites at Harijan ceremonies, civic surveys of Harijan centres and vocational and industrial institutes for Harijans. The country is charged with a new atmosphere altogether, a new interest in the welfare of the Harijan community. The

most remarkable inspiration for this wide and vast Harijan uplift was derived from the handing over by Mahatmaji of his Sabarmati Ashram to the Harijan cause. That was the only institution which he could call his or which people could call his, but with its disestablishment, aptly could it be said of Gandhi that "the birds of the air have their nests, the beasts of the field have their lairs, but the son of man truly hath not a place where to lay his head."

### A NEW CIVILISATION.

In my recent tour in Kathiawar I went to the state of Morvi and visited a Harijanavada which might well rival any Brahmana Agraharam in the Southern Presidency. At Bhavanagar, I saw a dining hostel and tannery. At Porbunder there is a beautiful Harijan institution. Everywhere, people are proud to take visitors to their Harijan institutions. They are the new marks of civilisation, the new emblems of national renaissance, the real proofs of national repentance.

### THE PROBLEM

To-day the problem before the country is the problem of the haves and have-nots. The problem of the future is not merely one of social reform or of religious fanaticism. The Harijans of Andhra Desa are mostly farm servants who plough and sow and cut and garner for the Savarna landowners. Their lot is unenviable. Frankly speaking, they are half starved.

Even to-day they are kept at a distance and to use a recent expression of Mahatmaji, they are more talked at than talked to, except when abused, and they are still regarded as untouchables except when they are pounced upon and beaten. They are mostly landless and the first scheme of reform should be to give land to groups of these Harijans on a co-operative basis, so that they take the lands on lease from the Co-operative society which should really own them so that they cannot alienate the land to sowcars.

We formulated such a scheme in 1921 in Kistna but it was torpedoed by the then Ministry of the Madras Government. To-day the land that has been assigned in former years to the Depressed Classes has mostly gone out of their hands and the Government was not till yesterday interested in the business. To-day there is only a half acre of cultivated land per capita in India and the food grown on it is hardly sufficient for the needs of the people. The Harijan farmer may be said to be virtually undergoing a kind of slavery in the villages: only there are no restrictions on their bodily movements except where the C. T. Act is applied. Not that there are not people who are happy in the service of their masters but that the range of choice being limited, endurance of tyranny becomes inevitable. For centuries these unfortunate people have been living on the same small pieces of dwelling site in spite of the growth of population. Village sites have therefore to be extended and

acquired and wherever possible, facilities must be created for the Harijans to live in the midst of the Savarnas. Separate hamlets are just as bad as separate schools, hostels, or separate tanks and wells or electorates, they really promote untouchability and register it as a permanent feature of society. The economic depression felt by these people is indescribable. In their case is the old dictum true more than in any other—"workers of the world, unite—for, you have nothing to lose but your chains." What does a village Harijan stand to lose in this world? Practically nothing and so whenever his stomach pinches he does not hesitate to commit a dacoity or to participate in a rioting as an extreme measure.

### RIGHT A NATIONAL WRONG.

Our duty therefore, does not end with touching the Harijans. We must go one step further and take them to the fold of our families and take steps to ameliorate their economic position. Treat them as fellow-men or fellow-women and press into service this great national cause, and India's freedom will be attained much earlier than otherwise. Even their admission into temples, a great reform in itself indeed, achieved by the Maharaja of Travancore and the Prince of Lathi may not compensate for neglect in the economic field. The Harijan problem is a composite one of self-purification as well as social helpfulness. It is a multifaceted one in that the issues involved are as much economic as

social, as much ethical as religious. Let us therefore right this national wrong and raise our brethren along with ourselves to a higher stage of civic progress and political liberty. "Removal of untouchability is a matter of change of heart" says Mahatma Gandhi "Hearts are not changed by expenditure of money, however wise it may be. The change will come when we have enough selfless spiritually-minded workers Monetary contributions will be an effective test of the existence of such persons for one of the results of the change of heart should be incessant work amongst Harijans. This cannot be come without plenty of funds. School and hostels cannot be opened, nor can wells be dug without ample funds. I hope, therefore, that the Sangh will receive liberal support from both rich and poor according to their means."

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## CHAPTER XV

### NO COMMUNAL STRIFE DEEP DOWN IN RURAL LIFE.

#### Mass Contact Programme, A Welcome Movement.

Often-times what appears to be the simplest of things turns out to be one of the most difficult to achieve. One should have thought that, in any age of nationalistic ideas with the whole of Europe serving as an example to mankind of conflicting interests being reconciled in a common unity and of all discords being hushed in peace, the rest of the world would find no difficulty in establishing a spirit of like unity each in its own borders and thus consolidating the spirit of nationalism all over the earth. Yet, to-day we find that our country has been torn asunder and cut into various pieces of territory, various groups of community, various rivalries of interest not because these are inevitable but because a foreign Government holding sway over a distant land 6,000 miles away from its own home is bound unwittingly to bring about its own strength and stability in its quest of Imperialism. Go where you like to the villages in India, whatever social or religious differences you may find between the devotees of one faith and another, the identity of economic interest and the sense of fellowship that prevails amongst such diametrically opposite communities as the Muslims

and the Hindus or the Savarnas and the Avarnas amongst the Hindus themselves or the higher or lower castes amongst the Savarnas is a spectacle which is bound to take by surprise those who have been fed upon the pabulum provided by the European tourists in India of this ancient country being a continent with rival religions, conflicting interests and warring faiths in the villages the Muslim and the Hindu hobnob with each other and chum with each other, little noticing that the faith of the one is different from the faith of the other.

Religion is a personal matter to each of them and is observed with the most meticulous loyalty to the doctrines underlying each faith. Yet in matters social, in matters economic there is a sense of harmony, yea, there is a sense of identity of interests and people recognise that a flood<sup>1</sup> would be equally devastating to the lands of either community and storm would be equally ruinous to all the members of the village irrespective of caste, creed or colour. Nature makes no distinction in conferring its bounties upon the people that inhabit the globe or visiting the nations of the world with the disasters and the cataclysms which are interspersed with its gifts of beneficence all along. When should man create these artificial barriers between the one citizen and another and say that India is a house divided against itself.

### **Divided against Itself.**

After nearly two centuries of British rule in India the one dominant factor with which the people are impressed is that they are a nation divided against itself. Often times public attention has been rivetted on the divisions brought about in this ancient country by artificial standards set up under the foreign government. A third of India in area and a fourth of it in population has been set apart as the Indian States, which it is widely advertised are independent units, territories bound by the Crown of England by ties of friendship and alliances secured by treaties, sanads and engagements. In reality the Princes are merely puppets who hold their territories at the pleasure of the Crown of Britain.

On the other side the country is divided into 11 Provinces and attempts have been made very sedulously to confer franchise and organise elections in a manner that the popular voice might not tell yet. Vox Dli has become really Vox Populi and once the Britisher has shot wide of the mark in the calculations that he has made. After dividing the country thus territorially, India has been further divided into communities, the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Harijans each with its own electorate virtually and each being pitted against the other, even in elections by force of cumulative vote and each being encouraged to make its own demands in the composition of Ministries as against another. Then the country has been divided

in interests as between the urban and the rural population and it is now widely known how the urban interests are patronised by the British Government in India better than the rural interests, how the standards of taxation governing the urban population are much less rigid and much less exacting than those governing the rural interest.

### Pigeon Holes

Finally the country has been cut up obliquely into various pieces called the Plains and the Agency areas. In the latter the ordinary rules and regulations of civil liberty and civil justice do not obtain and summary procedure is adopted. People are subjected to a certain measure of despotism which perhaps, is much more attenuated in the Plains than in the Agencies. Besides these there is the group of planters, the group of European Commercial interests, the University, the women of each community as a separate factor in elections.

All these differences therefore help to constitute India into a kind of pigeon-hole, where each compartment is labelled, ticketed and docketed and the 35 crores of people are classified and placed into compartments—water-tight, air-tight and idea-tight compartments—and are encouraged to feel that they are different from one another in thoughts, sentiments and ambitions.

### **Communal Consciousness.**

This is the genesis and the *modus operandi* relating to the division of the country into various groups and then we are told that this country cannot be a nation because the people talk 200 languages and profess several religions and present a thousand sects and sub-sects. We have accepted this statement piously made and sedulously propagated by the rulers and we have remained not only silent but felt helpless under this sense of internal division. Indeed these divisions did not play a part in the political life of the country so long as the elected element in the legislatures was of a negligible character.

It was in 1893 that for the first time an elected element was introduced into the Indian Legislative Councils, Provincial and Central, and till then the Councils were only composed of the nominated element both officials and non-officials. When however the small elected element of 1893 (seven in Madras) was sought to be expanded to 28 the communal consciousness was roused. In fact, it was one of the operating causes which had led to the division of Bengal earlier in 1905 into two provinces and the Muslim consciousness was for the first time roused by that partition. Till then the Hindus were patronised by the British but when they saw that the national spirit began to permeate the millions of Hindus in India it was considered safe to put a spoke in the wheel of progress and a

Muslim Province was created in East Bengal. This wrong of partition was ultimately repaired in 1911 but the mischief continued to remain operative in the minds of the communities. The bitterness once engendered began to feed itself upon the anger and spirit of vengeance within and beginning from 1908 we have the sad spectacle of the Hindu Muslim differences tainting the pictures of development of Indian polity.

### A SAD STORY

People however woke up betimes and in 1916 took steps to repair the great wrong. But instead of joint electorates the sense of separateness once established had to be implemented in the Hindu-Muslim Concordat of Lucknow of 1916 and ever since that time, separateness has formed the basis of all talks. But when the Khilafat movement arose in the year 1921 all differences were forgotten for the time being, although with the abolition of the Khilafat and the abandonment of the claims of the Kalifa by Turkey itself, the home of the Khalifs, this sense of unity suddenly disappeared giving rise to a violent culminating discharge of the pent-up feelings which had been kept down under the weight of an overpowering sentiment. From 1924 right down to last year it was a sad story of Hindu Muslim differences now rising to the level of a pitched battle, now assuming the shape of subdued spirit of rivalry. But people were easily able to see that all these rivalries,

conflicts and warfares, were the creation of the English-educated classes who were fighting for their own advancement individually and not for the national advancement of the communities as a whole. The Congress was easily able to recognise the truth of this aspect of the matter even so early as 1931. Soon after the return of Mahatma Gandhi from the 2nd Round Table Conference and the very first statement that he made to his colleagues of the Working Committee was that any further negotiations or developments relating to Indian polity should be based on Hindu-Muslim unity and that while he had been prepared for various differences at the Round Table Conference he was not prepared to see the sad developments that he had witnessed in London as between the Hindus and the Muslims on the one side and as between the Moderates and the Congressmen on the other.

The 'visualisation of a thing' he said 'is quite different from the actualisation thereof,' and 'that the actualisation of the bitterness, the rancour and the impossible spirit displayed at the second Round Table Conference opened the eyes of the nation to the supreme fact that there are people in this country who would subordinate the immediate to the remote, the principle of expediency and the national to the communal.

### MASS CONTACT.

Accordingly since last year a new movement has been set up in order to establish mass contacts with

the Congress The Congress itself having started as a movement of the upper classes who were doubtless trying to do their duty by the lower classes and the rural population, ever since the birth of this great institution, but developed into middle-class movement manned by the English-educated few and finally became a popular movement in the year 1921 ever since the advent of Mahatma Gandhi on to the scene of operation. Yet it remained defective and lopsided in that the man-in-the street is not absorbed into the Congress as an integral, intelligent, and vitally operative factor of the great national assembly and for two years this work of developing mass contacts in earnest has been going on Mass-contact includes the Hindu masses as well as the Muslim masses and therefore in that expression is implicit the idea of the developing of contacts with the Muslim masses as well Thus the centre of gravity of the Hindu-Muslim negotiations has shifted from the cultured English educated Muslim population to the large unsophisticated mass of Muslims inhabiting the towns and villages and hobnobbing with their Hindu brethren in the fields of their labour.

This has proved hopeful to a degree We do not say hopeful beyond expectation because the expectation was always there that deep down in the lower strata of rural agricultural and industrial life there are no conflicts between the Hindus and Muslims. Ere long we may hope that the Muslim masses will come into intimate touch with the Indian National Congress and

make that institution much more truly representative of the various interests in the country than perhaps it is even at the present moment. When that not very far off divine event has been hastened, well may we be able to say that India will have attained its manhood once again and will be able to assert its complete independence not by a mendicant policy, not by halting tactics, not by a programme of working reforms which it has decided to reject but by calling upon the alien rulers to stand and deliver the goods to the rightful owners the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsis, the Christians and the Harijans who will all be known by one common value-Indians

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## CHAPTER XVI

### NATIONAL EDUCATION.

Amongst the items of the national programme that arrested the attention of the National Congress so long ago as 1905 the place of importance was given to National education by which was meant "education on National lines under National control and directed towards the realization of the National destiny." That was the definition which the Congress adopted in Calcutta in 1906 at the Congress session held under the presidency of Dadabhai Nowroji. High Schools sprang up in East Bengal and National Institutions came into being in the Punjab, Bengal, Maharashtra and in South India. North, East, South and West, the country was dotted with semineries for the propagation of national education. These institutions remained unaffiliated to any University and unrecognised by the Government of the day. There was soon a pause in the history of the movement until 1917 when Annie Besant's Home Rule Movement gave a fillip to it. Once again the banner of National Education was hoisted high under the auspices of a society compendiously known as S. P. N. E. or (Society for the Promotion of National Education) and it gathered round it a large number of young men. This movement too soon suffered a setback in 1919. The Non-co-operation movement gave rebirth to the movement in 1921. The boycott of schools and colleges

forming a part of the triple boycott movement, national education held the field once again. Great changes have come over the country since and to-day Provincial Autonomy has been established in all the provinces in India while in seven provinces out of eleven, the Congress holds the reigns of power in its hands,—power of course such as it may be. People naturally ask why we still speak of national education and what exactly we mean by it at this stage when Congress Ministers control the departments. Yes, this is true. But the control is nominal. The Ministers are only in office and do not exercise full power. The real powers are all in the hands of the Departmental Heads who are not full or even partly amenable to the discipline, nor share the impulses and the inspirations that guide or should guide our Ministers. We are still moving in the same old track very much like a gin horse moving round and round in a circle but never moving a step further. To-day we have not been able to impart instruction through the medium of the mother tongue from the beginning right up to the end of the school course. To-day the craze for examinations is as intense as ever before. To-day the passion for a purely literary education which carries us no-where which qualifies the young men for unemployment and which is being pursued with a pious faith worthy of a better cause holds the field and fascinates teachers, pupils and parents, alike. Having created unemployment deliberately at great expense we raise the universal cry that the country is suffering from

unemployment. To-day the bias of the youthful mind is still towards University education which it should be towards an industry, or craft or trade by which they can lead an honourable livelihood. But then we are confronted with the question what industry, calling or trade can we train our boys up for. This ultimately is the problem of national education affecting the youth of the country and is much the same as the problem of national emancipation affecting the citizens of the country. Unless there is complete freedom there cannot be full scope for the exercise of commercial industrial and technical privileges required for the promotion of national prosperity, unless in other words, the country is wholly self-governing without any industrial and commercial safe-guards, unless India has "Purna Swaraj" the problem of the conservation of Indian wealth and the promotion of Indian well-being which really are the objectives of National Education cannot be attacked in all its multifarious aspects to any advantage whatever. Nevertheless our efforts must be of a simultaneous character directed on the one hand towards the emancipation of the country from the thralldom of the foreign yoke and the bandage of foreign commerce and of foreign industry. To this end we must generate in the minds of our youth a passion for culture which is indigenous for crafts and arts which are calculated to promote the prosperity of the country. Herein lies the key to the problem of national education. This is the real bother with the British conquest of India which is not merely political but commercial,

cultural and spiritual. It has been to the interests of the Britishers in India to cast the youthful mind into moulds of their own pattern, and produce models of a pro-British type. Accordingly the youth of the country has been taught to revel in a knowledge of English in English Degrees, titles, positions, preferments and pensions, taught too take real delight in talking in a foreign language, writing letters home in English and sending marriage invitations in English. This passion for the language of the conqueror—the language adopted in the colleges, and councils in which all orders of Government rules, regulations standing orders are communicated, this irrepressible rage to talk with one another in English has possessed the people of all grades and classes and come to be regarded as the mark and test of culture. It is difficult for us to persuade our friends to talk in their mothertongue in the legislature, in the courts and in the colleges. We have been arguing that a university can be conducted through the medium of the mother tongue, that provinces should be carved out on a language basis and that it would conduce to better administration of Justice in the country to carry on proceedings of the courts in the language intelligible to the clients. It does not strike us as odd that a foreign language should be adopted for these purposes.

While this is the position in so far as language is concerned the position in regard to culture is even worse. We have been taught to believe that there are no paintings in this country, that art did not exist and

that light must emanate from the West and not from the East. The passion for the reproduction of things in a realistic style eclipses that other passion for spiritual art. Architecture itself has undergone a tremendous change in the country. Old styles that have served to beautify the cities of Jaipur and Udaipur, Delhi and Agra, Bijapur and Aurangabad, Tanjore and Madura have disappeared and are thought lightly of. Ancient temple architecture, sculptures, and paintings have not been studied but neglected. Even now the Ministers have not thought it worthwhile spending even five thousand rupees for the popularisation of these sculptures. As for the manuscripts in the Tanjore library which are apt to decay by centuries of neglect there is no knowing when they will be resuscitated. A huge and strenuous effort will have to be made in order to transcribe all these manuscripts and make available to the public the storehouse of knowledge that lies embedded in the seeming debris of palm leaves and decaying paper. The Congress Ministries have not thought fit to spend an extra rupee on this noble task.

Go where you will, the grandeur and glory of the ancient crafts is there untarnished and unscathed by age or by the vandalism of the foreigner. Where shall we begin? Where shall we end in studying these marvels? In a rapid survey of these vast monuments of ancient idealism worked out in stone and brick and colour extending over centuries of toil of incessant character. Starting with the Kulasekhara Mandap

and the hardly visible paintings that lie upon the ceilings of the temples in Trivandrum and proceeding to the massive architecture of Madura and the exquisitely delicate sculptures of Tanjore and from there proceeding to Halibede and Belur where work in stone remains the great wonder of the country recalling the filigree work of Bhoj Done on Gold and Silver, making a comparative study of the magnificent bull in Tanjore, Mysore, Lepakshi and Belur and Halibede we begin to wonder how long these works must have taken to complete and what vast treasures must have been consumed by them. At Lepakshi the ceiling of the temple is full of beautiful paintings which are preserved intact though they are four or five hundred years old and in which the most stirring scenes of the lives of the kings and saints are rendered into colour and form. Besides these, there are the architectural marvels at Lepakshi of pillars huge in dimension, hanging from the ceiling without resting on the ground pillars revolving. Tadapatra and Penugonda are full of temples which bear testimony to the amount of labour and money that must have been spent upon art and architecture at one time, and to the comparative ruin into which they have fallen in recent years owing to the culpable neglect of those who hold authority to-day. For boldness of design, for neatness of execution, for intense love of detail and the highest purity of workmanship, for energy and expressiveness for the blending of scientific curiosity with architectural beauty for the execution of these most exquisite paintings and sculptures in the darkest corners of the

temples which are hardly visible to the human eye, these various institutions hold the first place in India. In Belur and Halibede stone pillars of the mandaps have only to be moistened with a wet cloth in order to present the most curious phenomenon of reflection and refraction of the objects round about, the reflections and refractions seen in one differing entirely from those seen in another. The magnificent form of Virabhadraswamy inside the temple which is utterly dark has to be seen only with the aid of a fierce electric search light and even so in parts because from end to end it is 30 feet long. Travelling further west, we go to Bijapur with its magnificent dome and its whispering gallery the caves of Badami and Undavalli which have been recently discovered. The magnificent temple architecture of Warangal in Hyderabad and the caves and structures at Ellora and Ajanta of which H. E. H. the Nizam is the fortunate possessor and above all the caves of Elephanta whose proportions defy imagination. Look at the 27 caves of Ajanta taking centuries to construct and say who can imagine the amount of money that must have been spent on them. Money was no consideration. Imagine the measure of service that was put into it. The artist and the craftsman did not execute their work by plans and estimates, by tenders and contracts by bills and time limits. They poured out their souls into songs and 'stone and in colour, and then revelled in the execution of their work. It was their own self-realisation, not their enrichment that they aimed at, in ancient days. Knowledge was not a

thing that was put up for sale. Books did not form the subject of a trade. The gain of money was not a qualification to the possession of culture and learning. Travelling further north we go to Ahmednagar, where the shaking towers in the mosque fill us with admiration. One of these towers was demolished and rebuilt by the British research Engineers but the shaking has disappeared. There are other curiosities in Ahmedabad. The great well there is a marvel in itself. The lofty stone images of Gomateswara at Sravanabelagula in Mysore is not merely a marvel but a miracle. Finally we come to the glories of the Agra and the Delhi Palaces and the great massuoleum which has been described as a dream in marble. The Taj which for its loveliness, for the delicacy of its taste and its attention to detail, for the labour that it involved and the imagination that lay at its root, staggers all attempts to unravel its secrets. Only you have a rival in Ajanta—conceived in broad sweeps and wide curves and possessing a magnificence and magnitude which are unparalleled in the country. Proceeding to the East we come across the temples at Jagannath and Bhuvaneswar and Kanrack which belong to a category of their own.

What was the origin of this knowledge, where did all this inspiration spring from. Where are the scholars that designed them, where are the workmen that executed them? The study of all these matters constitutes the programme of real National Education.

We witness the same marvels in the domain of medicine painting, poetry, and Drama Our drama is at least 800 years older than the English Drama. In the domain of medicine and surgery our ancestors made progress thousands of years ago to the degree attained by western scholars and scientists only six decades back

We have to unravel the secrets of these sciences and arts, of these various departments of engineering, medicine, law and literature These would be the real national education As graduates of a National university our duty in life would be not merely to pursue the careers for which we have qualified ourselves, but to pursue the investigation of those fields of knowledge and learning which had attained a high degree of excellence in olden days, but which came to a stop in progress centuries ago A country under foreign domination suffers for want of royal or state patronage as much in the domain of culture and arts of social laws and civic institutions as in the domain of pure politics. The King is not merely the embodiment of luxury and self-indulgence, nor an instrument for the maintenance of Law and Order, but is the head of society and monitor and mentor to his people in matters based upon custom and tradition. Where custom becomes rigid and sets into established and unchangeable practice, progress ceases. Under the foreign rulers India had suffered this setback not only in customary law, but in various other social matters on account of the unwillingness of the rulers to interfere with authority and

tradition in society. The ancient embodiment of popular will has become a mere vestige of the past if not altogether vanished out of existence. Thus has custom become petrified and knowledge and learning begun to stagnate. With the onslaught of foreign civilization not only do few fashions and new styles come into vogue, but the old knowledge is derided and made the victim of prejudice or even evil. The channels along which the currents of knowledge learning and research, have coursed along for centuries, suddenly suffer a setback by the onrush of counter and cross currents impinging against them with the result that not only do they not progress but they became dried up and covered over with the debris and the accretions of decades. Our duty under the circumstances is to dig up the debris and find out the degree to which progress had advanced unchecked in its ancient march and the methods by which that progress had reached that degree.

“A University” as Prof. Walter Ralieggh has said, “is an institution for guarding inheritance of knowledge. . . It rehandles all fundamental conceptions and revises these. It begins from the beginnings and builds from the foundation. It raises fresh crops by turning over the old soil. It is constantly vigilant on the frontiers of knowledge.”

The impediment to such lines of progress arises both from ignorance and from vested interests. Where Universities have made examinations the be-all and

end-all of life, even detached admissions of administrators, educationists and business men regarding the inutility, and the mischievousness of the prevailing system of education have not succeeded in securing relief from their tyranny. The boys pursue them in ignorance, the parents under inertia and the teachers under a self-wardness. The Ministers who may be in charge of education are themselves the products of an effete system, subject to the philistinism that stands foursquare against all progress. The impact of modern ideas and modern culture has so far denationalized our leaders of thought in the country that they fail to recognise the elementary, even as it is the fundamental law of all progress—namely that the civilization of a nation is one continuous stream of cultures—past, present and future, and that every nation marches from the past by the present to the future. The past lives in the present and the present heralds the future. All our canons of morality and codes of ethics, are but the blend of ideas of different eras,—the resultant of various forces operating in various directions. The same reasoning would make our civilization not merely a blend of the past and the present but also of the East and the West. In an age where intercourse between nations is not merely commercial but cultural as well, the civilization of the day should be many sided and multifaceted, from each of the faces and facets of which emanate the scintillations of the different cultures, that make up the whole blend. Naturally the present day

leaders are still under the glamour of their new culture which has made them what they are and until their minds should be developed on proper lines the national institutions should continue to play their humble part, removed from all limelight, in the umbras and penumbras of their nationalism and keep alive the torch of introspection in the hope that the day will not be far when the light which has guided them through sunshine and storm may lighten the path of the nation in its march to its national destiny.

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## CHAPTER XVII

### RURAL RECONSTRUCTION

#### What it is — and what it is not

Not seldom do young enthusiasts interested in Rural welfare ask for advice and suggestions in regard to the problems of Rural Reconstruction. The nature of the problem as well as the conditions of it are the points that really have to be studied so that the principles of solution may be correctly grasped, much as we do the root of a disease in order to understand the principles of treatment.

What is wrong with our villages? Surely the village people to-day are better informed, perhaps better dressed and are able to talk and discuss problems of national concern better than their forbears. Yet there is a universal cry that village welfare is a problem by itself and that its multiple aspects should be studied and attacked in order to lay the foundations well and truly of national life. This demand for enquiry and attention, for diagnosis and treatment, although it had taken its origin more than a generation ago with non-official politicians, was later shared by the apostles of the co-operative movement and latterly emphasised by certain enthusiastic members of the Indian Civil Service.

To-day when Congress is in charge of seven provinces and exercises influence in at least two others, Rural Reconstruction and its problems have come to attract attention at the hands of Ministers and various attempts are being made at different places in different directions. Collateral industries, such as poultry breeding and beekeeping the revival of craft life, chiefly weaving and spinning, the elimination of machinery, leading to the use of handpounded rice, handpressed oil, hand-prepared jaggery, hand-made paper, hand-ground flour — all these have arrested attention in the more extreme quarters, while with the more moderate sections, the slogans are better seed, better manures, better marketing, better prices. Popular education by the magic lantern, rapid spread of ideas by broadcasting, ocular demonstrations of progress through the cinema, touring lecturers, moving shops, and 'flying' leaflets these are advocated for popular Education and propaganda by governmental agencies.

In the midst of this bewildering variety of ideas and ideals, the young pracharak as well as the elderly enthusiast are lost, being unable to pick and choose, to lay their hands on the one preoccupation which they should preach and pursue in order to advance the cause of rural welfare. It is therefore worth while examining the whole problem in all its complexities and evolve a few simple principles by which we may be helped to unravel the tangle into the meshes of which the people of the villages and their affairs have been caught up.

Let us repeat the question,—What is wrong with our villages? Whatever the answer may be, it must be a comprehensive one dealing with village life in its entirety, village life as it flourished in its palmist days, village life as the real foundation and plinth of a well-ordered, well-built national life. The invasion of the country by foreigners had not disturbed the even tenour of our village life till the western nations set foot on our soil. Even so it was not till the seeds of Imperialism with its two-fold rendering into life — namely, Industrialism and Militarism, were laid in the invention of the steam engine and the application of power to all handicrafts that our village life began to be disorganized. The details of this study have been the subject of many a thesis dealing with Gandhism *versus* Socialism, Machinery *versus* Handpower, Soul force *versus* Brute force. It is not therefore necessary to repeat all those arguments here. But a rapid survey and summary will be given in a paragraph or two.

The foreign conquest of India by the Britisher has been a multifaceted one,—not being merely territorial or political, but industrial and commercial but in order to advance these aspects, also educational and cultural. If the Moghuls conquered India, they settled in this country and pooled their art, their philosophy and their culture with ours, enriching our national asset both in volume and content. Britain has done the opposite. She has thrust her articles of trade on us, her language and literature, her examinations and

degrees, her culture and ideals. Accordingly the villages of India began to migrate to towns, handicrafts gave place to machinery skilled labour yielded to mechanical labour. Labour ceased to be capital and became itself an article of trade, a mechanical unit devoid of personality, elasticity and capacity for progress and development. The trade of Lancashire and Birmingham, of Dundee and Liverpool, — the fabrics and tools, the socks and salt was followed up by a trade in English books—the biggest trade of Britain in India perhaps—then the trade in Law and Legislation. Thus the markets of India, the Courts, Colleges and Councils of India became the purveyors to the Indians under virtual force of authority of fashions and fabrics, Laws and Institutions, Culture and Education. There was a desperate struggle on the part of the villagers to migrate to towns and imbibe the new civilisation which if we may compendiously describe in one word, we can call Britania, much as the Roman culture of old was briefly termed in Britain, *Romania*.

What has happened in the wake of these new-fangled ideas? Political preferment is the natural ambition of a conquered people even to the extent of an abject and servile struggle for it. The old order yielded place to new. The bias for agriculture soon disappeared. Urban life has developed irresistible attractions for the rural population. Plain living and high thinking have been reversed in principle and high living and plain thinking have taken their place. Love of ease superseded the old strenuous life. A scramble for offices has

destroyed the old sense of independence—individual as well as National. Indigenous culture has vanished in our quest for a study of the foreign language. The very traditions of the nation have been forgotten. The past has ceased to live in the present. The present has become an end in itself instead of being made the seedbed of a rich and enlivening future. Swift and summary administration of justice at the scenes of dispute have been displaced by pompous courts with ostentatious methods of formalized procedure wanting in the personal element and perilously bordering on the mechanical. Education has become Regimentation while administration of justice has degenerated into administration of Law, the principles of which were imported from abroad. Custom has become petrified and ceased to grow. Case Law has introduced an element of gambling into the Temples of Justice. Lying is at a premium. Truth has become discounted. Evidence cannot be tendered in the form of a story but truth must be pieced, if it can be, from the answers elicited by the “cunning” of lawyers, to detached questions of chief cross and re-examinations. In effect the worse appears the better reason and it is not the strength of the *vadam* but of the *vadi* that has come to win. The competition for the attentions and affections of the foreign rules has roused feelings of jealousy and envy amongst the people and generated in them in an intensive and vicious form a sense of caste and sect and bad blood has come to flow freely and strain and taint national life in all its aspects—notably elections

and services. The village crafts have been destroyed. Machinery has become the ruling power. The indigenous taste for art and beauty has decayed. *Rights* have taken the place of duties, competition, of co-operation and hatred of love. A certain cynicism and despair have overtaken the village people arising from increasing taxes and decreasing amenities, uncertainties of Nature and unreliability of men, hopes deferred and ambitions foiled. The perpetual desire to rise higher in society to the upper strata of life has created the slogan of 'Raise your standard of life' but every day it is lowering instead of rising. Wages have dominated Labour, *Money* has superseded *service*. If the loot carried by Clive and Hastings raised the standard of wages in England, that is no reason for making a like demand in India. Divisions between rural and urban interests have been accentuated by the very Government that rules the land. There appears no hope without abolishing the Law College and restoring the Village Panchayats, abolishing the divisions and promoting a corporate spirit, abolishing the Industrial and Commercial safeguard and widening the avenues of life so as to provide employment to the starving and the naked.

What a strange prescription for a simple disease. All of us know that the distemper rests in the village, but here comes a physician who locates the treatment in Simla and Delhi, in Bombay and Madras, in Calcutta and Lahore. Yes it is so, for when the patient complains of pain in the stomach you trace the disease to

tubercle in the lungs and when a girl complains of pain in the knee, the trouble is traced to tubercle in the spine. The Constitution is one; the diseases are many and protean.

On reviewing these paragraphs one is apt to say that we have in dealing with Rural Reconstruction, only re-stated the National problem. That is so, for does not the Indian Nation really live in the village? While it is broadly correct to state that we cannot rebuild our nation from the very foundations, it is equally correct to aver that the problem is as much psychological as physical or economic in its character and outlook. The one desideratum for village reconstruction is a correct appreciation of National ideals. That is why we have prepared this paper at such length with a discussion of National degeneration. The one great obstruction to a synthetic application of National energy to the basic problems of our country is the chasm that has been created between the classes and the masses. The former are unwilling to go to the village and when they do, they view the problems of their brethren with a certain condescension. The first step therefore in planning Rural Reconstruction is to pick up men who would not play the role of superiors or benefactors. They must feel at one with the rural population,—one in suffering and sickness, one in service and sacrifice. Do you feel for the poor human beings dwelling in slush and mud, dirt and disease? If so are you prepared to minister to their wants and

relieve their owes. You go to the village choultry. The roof is full of cobwebs and the floor of pits. Do you take a broom and clear the cobwebs and a spade and fill in the pits below? Do you take a crowbar and replace the pillars of the falling house near by? Do you shed a tear for the baby that wants milk and seek to feed her? In one word do you put up a board to offer of service unto those that are in distress and invite people to allow you to share their sorrows and sufferings? We may not all be saints Francis' of Assissi or saints Gandhi of Sabarmati, but let us not pose as heavenborn beings come down to earth to take pity on the poor and destitute, the hungry and the naked.

You pass by along the street, will you give a helping hand to raise the haystack on to the labourer's head? A calf is running away from the home, do you just stop the little thing and help to restore it to its home? The little child returning from the market has spilt her ghee on the ground, will you offer her an anna to replace the lost contents of the vessel. The mother is beating the child which worries her for a pice to buy some eatables. Will you relieve the helplessness of the poor woman by satisfying the child's need. Oh, the pity of it all! What is wanted - and wanted badly and sadly is a spirit of fellowship and oneness with our brothers and sisters in the village. Once you have it, you will draw water for the Panchama (Harijan) from the well where still the demon of untouchability reigns supreme. Once you have it, you will allow the Harijan grass-cutters with their loads of greengrass on to the ferry to

cross the river along with you. Once you have it, you will slake the thirst of the Harijan labourer by serving water in a vessel or satisfy his hunger by feeding him under your roof.

Village reconstruction of course requires collateral industries to support the poor labourer and cultivator by supplementing his inadequate wages or by finding work for him when he is unemployed. Vegetable growing, farming, beekeeping, spinning, weaving, paper making, flour grinding,—these and a hundred other occupations can be rediscovered for satisfying the needs of the villager. But here again it is the townsman that must prefer the carpet to the chair, the quill to the steel pen, the Khaddar Dhoti to the Lancashire Mill, the indigenous toys to the Japanese substitutes. The villages are the centres of culture, the fountainsprings of Art, the abode of crafts and if our urban tastes do not yearn for the village products, what good it is telling the village folk on the radio, that they should bathe every day, for which they require water, or that they should be clean, for which they require a square meal. A hungry man is an angry man and even radios do not fill stomachs any more than votes.

The village autonomous unit requires urgently to be re-established. It must be a punchayet, an arbitration Board and a co-operative society. It must exercise moral authority, administer local matters and arrange agricultural finance. These are the instruments—call

them institutions that make for the self-sufficiency of the village. The village Reading Room doubtless keeps the villagers in daily touch with the progress of events around and abroad. The newspapers give the pabulum for the mind even as the fields and their crops give the food to the body. The schools should no longer be studied institutions calculated to create unemployment. From the pin to the motor car let the villages manufacture and there will be no want or woe no problem of unemployment. We save enormous money by not sending our boys to these existing schools and to colleges where Education is costly denationalizing and futile. The drain on the villages must first be stopped if the little yield of the fountains should be conserved to subserve man's elementary needs. Next to the avoidance of waste, comes the recognition of the need for economy so that no man need live beyond his means, while, of course, the State should adopt every endeavour within its means to ensure food and raiment, housing and general culture to every man and every woman in society.

Let the townsmen beware that every one of them, notwithstanding the fact that he is living in a town can really live in a village. Imagine a young man who really lives in a village but goes to the town every morning for coffee and refreshments, every evening for the cinema or the theatre, every alternate day for a shave, every week for the laundry and every month for a crop, and every now and then for a new drama or for

a circus Does he live in the village? He buys his fabrics in the town, his mulls and ready-made twill shirts, his shoes and umbrella—all in the town! It is just as possible for a townsman to live in the village while dwelling in a town, as it is for the villager dwelling in the village to live in the town! The whole problem is a mental one, in which each town dweller and village dweller has to examine every purchase that he makes and ascertain whether the goods sought for are made abroad or within India, in towns or villages with machinery or with hands And he who buys Indian goods made in the village or be it in towns, with hands and indigenous raw materials,—it is he who is the real reconstructor of the village in India,—not he who spends his holiday evenings as student or professional man, and designs to deliver learned lectures on one subject or another. Think of the village and support his work and you will be a friend of village reconstruction.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### PEACE ARMY OR SANTI SAINYAM.

Amongst the several limbs that executed the orders of the Congress organism was a corps of volunteers known and recognized by the Congress as the Hindusthan Seva Dal. For over a decade it had functioned as a separate and independent body but latterly, i. e. about 1931 it was recognized as an affiliated body and was required to function under the guidance of a member of the Working Committee,—Sree Jawaharlal Nehru. In effect it was given a status well nigh on all fours with that of the All-India Spinners' Association (1925), All-India Harijan Sangh (1933) and All-India National Educational Council (1937). Like so many other Congress organizations, the Dal also was banned during the days of Civil Disobedience and equally with them, it stood released but not revived after the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement. From time to time there were references—not even attempts,—made in regard to the idea of reviving this All-India Organization which had performed its own duties at great sacrifice, but the proposal did not seem to have appealed to Mahatmaji and the Working Committee.

Ever since the Haripura Session of the Congress, the question of reconstituting a National Volunteer

Organization was before the Congress High Command and some were wondering why it had not taken definite shape. Mahatmaj's latest article on a Peace Brigade solves what little mystery gathered about the problem. While the objective of a volunteer organization should always be, as indeed it has always been, to render service, to maintain order and to serve as national militia subject to the cardinal Congress principles of Truth and Non-violence, it has been obviously felt that these two principles should not be mere habiliments put on by the army while on duty, but the real inspiration for the young folks to join the army at the very moment of recruitment. Truth and Non-violence are not a uniform prescribed by the Congress, but the very bone and muscle, the very tissue and texture of the volunteer organization. Army it is, but it is not the nucleus of a National Army into which it can convert itself overnight when the time comes, just as our prisoners became Ministers one fine morning on a call from the Governors. It is to be the nucleus of a new kind of army whose soldiers must function even after Swaraj,—not with belt and baton, not with rifle and sword, but with a sign of peace on their persons and a spirit of sacrifice in their hearts. Let us ponder over the scheme a little further.

All armies are recruited on the offchance of their having to face the music of the firing line. Some may never see the battle ground, others may not return from their first essay in man-slaughter undertaken on a

national scale. The analogy is that of a document which is duly stamped and attested. The document may never be challenged and have to go to courts. It has quietly served its purpose, as a preventive of all opposition or it may be dragged to a Law Court and torn to pieces and become invalidated. It is finished. Such is the constitution of the regular armies of Nations and such are the vicissitudes of these armies.

The question has been often asked whether India which seems to make a rich show of its ahimsa theories can possibly carry on her Swaraj without maintaining armies or armaments. Equally has it been asked, when we spoke disparagingly of machinery and machine-products, whether we could dispense with Railways and Motors, Telegraphs and Telephones. It serves no purpose to carry an argument to its logical absurdities. All logical conclusions cannot be regarded as reasonable consequences. We must observe a sense of proportion even in our criticisms. The theory of *Ahimsa* as a factor of politics was advanced under conditions of hostility. It has survived them and steadily proved its worth and capacity to face tremendous odds against it. It is a new philosophy as applied to politics. Once we have recognised its potency even to withstand, overcome and overpower the brutal onslaughts of the mighty British, people must not repeat the same doubts and criticisms at every new attempt to extend the domain and range of its application.

But even here history, both past and contemporary furnishes ample evidences of the mighty potentialities of non-violence. How were the gladiatorial fights of old put an end to? Was it not the intervention of a believer in non-violence, who jumped in between two of these incarnations of brute force, and his death by the sword thrusts of the two gladiators that ultimately led to the abolition of this cruel pastime of the Romans? More recently, hardly two months ago, there occurred an event in the Punjab which deserves to be remembered by our friends taken up with doubt and cynicism. There ensued a quarrel between two families near allied to each other, which soon developed into an armed fight. When they were on the point of a murderous assault, lo and behold! there jumped in between them a girl of twelve bound by ties of consanguinity to both parties alike, and she happened to receive the blows intended for one another by the parties with the result that she succumbed and the contending parties, for the very shame of it parted and thereafter composed their differences not by the arbitrament of brute force but by the application of argument and reason. Scores of instances can be multiplied which occur in our epics to prove the potency of ahimsa. But we live in an age when Prahladas are dismissed as phantoms of the Poet's imagination and Faith itself has yielded place to doubt and despair.

But then people ask whether it is at all possible to recruit members of nonviolent army who will deliberately enlist themselves in order to make themselves the prey of angry mobs or brutal rowdies. Well,

let us ask the question why people came in such large numbers in the great war to fill in the depleted ranks of the fighting lines, to become food for cannon fired by unknown hands. Not even the exalting motive of warding off a sanguinary fight between two near allied parties. Do you say that no one went voluntarily to the battle scenes in the great war and that recruits were forced by conscription? That would depict the horrors of war in colors much darker than we were wont to believe them to be. And all the more is the reason to abjure the traditional methods of settling disputes which would, as they never were, settled that way, for every peace that 'concluded' a war, only carried with it the seeds of a new war. We see it to-day. It is therefore time to vary our strategy. War has failed to procure peace. Let us try methods of peace to prevent war. There need not be the smallest doubt that people will come in to join the Peace Army, the prospect of death is common to recruitment both for war and for peace. No one fancies that when a soldier is recruited he is going to the barracks to play golf or football. He is carrying his life in his palm. Even so the recruit to the Peace Army joins his brigade fully prepared to die, but with the added inspiration that he is making a new experiment which judged by the excellent results yielded in the past, is full of promise like the results for the future.

The fundamentals of the problem being conceded, one is tempted to ask whether the time chosen for releasing the new idea is appropriate. This is a relevant question to put and it must be answered in the affirmative. In the first place, there is a persistent demand for the revival of the Hindustan Seva Dal,—may not be in the exact form that it had, but in some form or another.

We have advanced a good deal in our fight for Swaraj along the path marked out for us. That path is the path of Ahimsa, Non-co-operation, passive resistance, Civil Disobedience and Satyagraha — these have been the several stages of the political methods. Our evolution and the last of them — Satyagraha has come to stay under its influence the Ministers of Bihar and U. P. were able to get their prisoners released and equally, the Ministers of Orissa were able to secure the cancellation of a Governor's appointment. Indeed the latter must rank higher as a political achievement than the former. A political prisoner may be released, but any moment the British bureaucracy has it in its power to rearrest him. But to cancel the appointment to a Governorate of a member of the Heavenborn service is to allow the very Heavens to fall on our devoted heads. With these two immediate achievements to the credit of Satyagraha, no thinking person would demur to the reconstitution of our own volunteer force on altogether new lines—lines by no means new to Satyagraha, but new only to the old and effete and even vicious policy of 'a tooth for a tooth' and 'an eye for an eye'—of conquering evil with evil (*Sathyena sathyam jayeth*). There is further a peculiar appropriateness in releasing this plan at the moment that Mahatmaji has chosen for it. The selection of time may not have been conscious or deliberate, but there it is—the coincidence of the publication of the scheme just as the publication of Jinna-Gandhi correspondence took place. That correspondence has knocked the bottom out of the case of Mr. Jinna. The little prestige that he had built up for himself and for the Moslem League would have dominated Men's minds had he not unwisely, published the correspondence in question,—unwisely, from one standpoint, his own, but wisely for national progress. The

world is now enabled to judge for itself as to who is who—whether greatness rests with him who is prepared to humble himself before Readings, Irwins and Jinnas or whether it is an attribute of one who is too proud to Sheogaon. Kings and Queens, Presidents of Republics, Scholars and Savants, Statesmen and Generals would be glad to pay a visit to this new pilgrimage and get a glimpse of—let alone a chance of greeting—this protagonist of ahimsa, this philosopher of the new age who combines in him the learning of the scholar and the wisdom of the Saint, the courage of the General and the judgment of the Seer Janab Mohammed Ali Jinnas does not deign to see him at his place when in the view of his doctors his life is hanging between the *Duma* and the *Akhibath*. The last service that Gandhi may claim to his credit is not the strenuous effort he is putting forth to get the release of Sirdar Prithwi Singh and the apostles of force and violence, but the lasting foundation he is laying down of a new strategy, a new psychology, the psychology and strategy of non-violent resistance,—as a weapon of fight not merely to fight the battles of Statesmen and Warriors and Generals, but to put an end once for all to all wars and make the invasion of one country by another impossible in the first instance and infructuous in the second.

